Stourbridge
CHRONICLE
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FURY OVER CASH SPENT ON iPADS

Report by Jamie Brassington

COUNCIL chiefs in Dudley have been accused of 'wasting taxpayers' cash' after buying new computer equipment – including five new Apple iPads at a cost of £430 each.

The cash-strapped authority – currently in the midst of a savage round of cost-saving measures – bought the new iPads despite already having 42 working devices.

UKIP group leader Councillor Paul Brothwood labelled the iPads 'freebies' and described the cost as a 'total waste' of taxpayers' money.

Councillor Paul Brothwood, leader of UKIP in Dudley, said: "I don't support councillors having freebies off the council, whether it is food or iPads."It is a total waste of taxpayers' money.

"UKIP rejected having the equipment. We have our own laptops and mobile phones,

"This is a total lack of judgement. I don't see the need of buying more iPads.

"Why does a councillor need an iPad? I have been a councillor for two years and I can't think of one circumstance when I would need one. If I did I would buy my own."

Flexibility

Councillor Patrick Harley, Conservative leader in Dudley, said: "Cuts are being made to the elderly, poor, and disenfranchised of society and the council go and do something like this – which is to purchase five new iPads when there are 42 in storage.

"They are making cuts and blaming everyone but themselves and buy five new iPads. It is shameless."

The council have bought five iPad Air2 devices this year, at a total cost of £2,104.

A Freedom of Information request revealed the devices were bought to 'provide a productivity tool with access to email, systems and data on an agile basis.'

Finance boss Councillor David Sparks said: "We have a small stock of ICT equipment which is regularly reviewed and assigned to members of staff which helps them carry out their duties with greater flexibility than ever before.

"We do not routinely keep a stock of iPads, those currently held in stores are all earmarked for redistribution to officers as part of the initiatives to introduce smarter working practices in the council and to ensure value for money. In essence, every iPad is in use, being repaired or about to be used. There is no spare capacity and therefore no waste of council money."

In recent weeks Dudley Council has announced plans to save money after Government funding cuts. These include slashing funding for various charities in the borough, moving the art gallery collection out of the town centre, slashing library opening hours and possibly demolishing several blocks of flats in Netherton.

FLYING THE BLACK COUNTRY FLAG WITH PRIDE

Black Country Day was jointly celebrated with France's Bastille Day by jewellery designer Josephine Tournebizeat the Red House Glass Cone

THE Black Country flag was flown with pride across Dudley as the borough marked Black Country Day on Thursday and during the weekend.

Residents came out in force to celebrate all the region has to offer.

Since its launch in 2012, Black Country Day and its festival has gone from strength to strength.

Dignitaries gathered at Dudley Castle to fly the Black Country flag in front of one of the region's most iconic landmarks.

Festival organiser Steve Edwards said the response from the public this year has been better than ever. He hailed the buzz Black Country Day created on social media as a sign of how support for the event continues to grow.

Mr Edwards said: "The turnout was absolutely amazing. The amount of people out on the streets was fantastic but not only that but the reaction on social media was absolutely crazy. People were sharing pictures of the Black Country flag and it went mad online.

"It's always been about bringing the community to the forefront and promoting the region. This has linked the community with councils and businesses which is great. To see people's pride and passion is fantastic."

There was a European twist to the event at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley, which jointly celebrated Black Country Day and France's Bastille Day, which had extra significance later that evening due to the terror attack in Nice.

French jewellery designer Josephine Tournebize, wearing an eye-catching Eiffel Tower dress, flew the Tricolore flag outside her studio at the glass cone.

TRAFFIC

Delays predicted due to roadworks

MOTORISTS are being reminded about potential delays while resurfacing work takes place in Amblecote, which will mean the High Street is made temporarily one way.

Dudley Council said they have opted to resurface the A491 High Street during the school holidays in order to minimise disruption.

Work will take place between 9.30am and 3.30pm on Monday to Friday, and July 31, and again from August 1 to 3 and on August 7 and 14. Diversions will be in place.

TRIBUTE

Newly wed Robbie has died, aged 34

TRIBUTES have been made to a popular Stourbridge rugby player who has died, aged 34, after being diagnosed with cancer earlier this year.

Robbie Eves last week married his partner, Gemma. The couple were wed surrounded by friends and family, including sons, Ruaridh, aged four, and Euan, 21 months, at St Thomas' Church in Stourbridge. His brother Alex Eves said: "We lost a truly great man, a devoted family man, the strongest and bravest man I've ever known."

CRAZE

Driver caught out in chase for Pokémon

THE Pokémon Go craze sweeping the country, with thousands using a mobile phone app to catch monsters, has landed a Stourbridge motorist in trouble.

On Monday police pulled over a 27-year-old man suspected of playing the game on his mobile phone while behind the wheel.

The driver was stopped in Birmingham Street at 12.30pm. He was given a penalty penalty notice.

Officers tweeted under the Stourbridge Police account: "Male caught Stourbridge ring road on mobile phone, we suspect Pokémon but the ticket will poke this mon #PokemonGO."

INSIDE

FOLKS GO ON MONSTER HUNT

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Jealous man beat partner with table leg

David Oliver Churchman – jailed

A JEALOUS man who used a metal table leg to cut and bruise his partner's face, and then attacked her again four months later, has been jailed for a total of four years.

David Oliver Churchman, 31, of Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, was sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court for committing offences of causing actual bodily harm and criminal damage on February 20, and for again causing ABH and assaulting a police constable on June 7 this year.

Representing Churchman, Simon Burch said that both offences occurred after the defendant, who works for a sewage company, had been drinking with his partner.

The first occurred at her Stourbridge home, after they had been drinking and got on to the subject of their previous sexual partners. "It provoked a jealous response," said Mr Burch.

Churchman smashed up the living room furniture, then struck the victim, punched and kicked her and then broke a metal leg from a table and brought it down on her. The court heard she was left with a nasty cut to her face and a black eye.

Churchman was arrested for this offence and bailed, but then the couple resumed their relationship. On June 7 Churchman attacked the same woman after he came home to find her with another man, with whom he believed she was having an affair.

A police officer who attended the scene was verbally abused and punched by Churchman.

Churchman received a total of 48 months in custody.

A restraining order was also imposed banning Churchman from having any contact with the victim for five years.

Controlling son left mother £22k in debt

A TRAINEE quantity surveyor whose demands for money 'blighted' the life of his ill mother has become the first person in the West Midlands to be prosecuted for coercive and controlling behaviour.

James Ford told his 63-year-old mother hat he was taking her car to the garage for repair – and sold it for £500, a judge was told.

On another occasion Christina Ford allowed him to use her bank card to withdraw £50 and he instead took £250 from the account.

The 28-year-old, who had issues with alcohol and drugs and lived with his mother in Brierley Hill, also got her to sign agreements for loans and left her £22,745 in debt, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Ford claimed some was to provide assistance to another of her children.

The defendant warned the widow that he owed money to people who would torture her if she did not help him, said Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting. He added: "His behaviour has blighted the last three years for his mother. He was consistently asking her for money and would threaten her or cause damage to items.

Excess

"He said those to whom he was in debt would come to tie her up and pull her finger nails out. This worried her greatly. She was in no position to resist his demands because she was unwell. He was consuming excess amounts of alcohol and taking drugs."

The charge of coercive or controlling behaviour only became law on December 29 and so the offending could not be back-dated beyond that, although it had continued for at least two years, said the prosecutor.

Mr Simon Rippon, defending, said: "He appreciates that he left his mother in an invidious situation."

Ford, now living at Brook Street, Stourbridge, admitted coercive and controlling behaviour between December 29 and May 29 and was given a three year community order during which he can only live at an address approved by his supervising probation officer. He was also banned from any contact with his mother.

Back to the 1940s at museum

Bringing an era out of black and white to colour are museum visitors Raechel Smith and Harriet Ball

DUDLEY was transported back to wartime Britain at the Black Country Living Museum's ever popular 1940s Weekend.

More than 3,000 visitors glammed up to celebrate the bygone era, as soldiers and their sweethearts came out in full force.

While ladies put their locks in victory rolls, the gents Brylcreemed their hair or donned tribly hats as the Tipton Road attraction was transformed with vintage stalls, bands and war years displays.

Valerie Gaskill, who has worked as a learning assistant at the museum for 16 years, said: "It is wonderful to see the young ones come and indulge in the 1940s lifestyle and get into character.

"I love to see all the different costumes and hear the older generation speak about what they remember from the time too.

"It brings back a lot of nostaglia that grandparents can show grandchildren what it was really like."

Vintage vehicles also played part in the day which was extended from an evening event to a full weekend five years ago due to popularity.

Caroline Green, 58, from Worcester, said the event brought the era out of the black and white of history books and vintage films and into living colour. She added: "This is the third year we have been coming now after 16 years of re-enacting at 1940s events around the UK. There is something special about the backdrop of the Black Country Living Museum and the people."

Boss fears 'disastrous' cuts hitting older people

BOSSES of Age UK Dudley have labelled council funding cuts as 'disastrous'. It comes as council bosses have cut funding to the charity by more than £300,000.

Some of the cuts will take effect from September 30 with the biggest hit being from March 31.

Christine Szygowski, chief executive officer with the charity, said: "For the charity, who help older people across Dudley Borough, this is disastrous and will effect services addressing loneliness and isolation, day opportunities, information and advice and helping people stay safe in their homes.

"Age UK Dudley are working hard to provide some services in different ways but the scale of the cuts will mean that services, jobs and volunteering opportunities will be lost and all to the detriment of older people in Dudley."

Age UK Dudley, previously Age Concern Dudley, aims to enable the people of Dudley to make more of later life. It comes after Dudley Council last week pulled the plug on £250,000 of funding to the charity that runs the Beacon Centre for the Blind.

A day centre for dementia sufferers in Coseley is also set to close in September.

Councillor Qadar Zada, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "In the context of unprecedented cuts to funding from central Government we have been forced to review the services we currently commission.We value all the work done by the voluntary sector and recognise it as a key partner."

Suspected arson at derelict factory

IT is believed arson was the cause of a blaze at derelict factory in Halesowen, which was tackled by more than a dozen firefighters.

Fire crews were called to the scene at Excelsior Business Park on Thursday evening.

West Midlands Fire Service said callers had described 'large flames and smoke' coming from the building.

Twenty firefighters attended the blaze after being drafted in from Haden Cross, Smethwick, Oldbury and Woodgate Valley fire stations. Spokesman Neil Spencer said: "We had a call to Excelsior Industrial Estate on Cakemore Road at 10pm. A number of callers saying there were large flames and smoke coming from the site of the factory unit." Crews left the scene shortly before 1am.

Woman was hurt in two-car crash

A WOMAN was taken to hospital following a two-car crash in Kingswinford.

Police officers were called to the scene on Thursday evening along Bromley Lane.

The injured woman was later discharged.

School told it must take more than 80 extra pupils

A SEDGLEY school that opposed taking pupils from The Coseley School has been forced to accept more than 80 youngsters by the Government.

Youngsters will take up their allocated places at Dormston School in September after the school was told it had no grounds to refuse admitting additional pupils. More than 80 pupils had been offered places at the school following the decision for a phased closure of The Coseley School by 2017.

However, Dormston objected to the additional numbers saying an influx of pupils would leave it unable to cope as it continues to progress after pulling itself out of special measures. School leaders wrote to the Secretary of State over Dudley Council's decision.

The Department for Education upheld the council's decision on Friday, confirming it had acted reasonably in requiring Dormston to accept the pupils. Dudley Council chiefs made it clear to Dormston it should immediately contact parents to arrange inductions, discuss options choices and transition arrangements.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services said: "We've been extremely disappointed Dormston School has objected to accepting a number of additional pupils.

"Since before the start of the consultation on the closure of Coseley in January, Dormston has been aware there would be implications for it and it would need to accommodate additional pupils. Unfortunately it has chosen not to act in the best interest of the children and parents."

Author reveals key to success

A STOURBRIDGE-born businesswoman now living in America has launched a book on how to find success in business.

Val Wright, aged 41, has enjoyed a successful career working for companies such as Microsoft and Starbucks after starting on a Young Enterprise Scheme. Her book is entitled Thoughtfully Ruthless: The Key to Exponential Growth. She works as an innovation expert in Los Angeles.

She said: "Thoughtfully Ruthless lays out the secret to rapid business growth by showing you how to unbelievably invent more time, catapult your energy and boost the productivity of your resources. Thoughtfully Ruthless reveals how to create explosive growth."

Lawyers stage a charity fun day

A Black Country legal firm is holding a family fun day next month. Brierley Hill-based Higgs & Sons is putting on the event in aid of the Stroke Association at Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club onAugust 21, from noon to 3pm.

Exhibition on rescue of historic chapels

Inside one of the historic chapels

AN exhibition is taking place at a pair of historic chapels in Lye to showcase the revamp of the Victorian landmark.

Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapels in Cemetery Road had been abandoned for 20 years before the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust took the Grade II listed buildings over to rescue them.

The exhibition is on display at the Thomas Robinson Building, which is the new name for the chapels, and will run Monday to Saturday until the end of July.

The trust raised over £1,150,000 to fund the cost of the project to safeguard the iconic building, which ultimately created a suite of facilities for use by Dudley Council Citizenship & Registration Services.

A grant of £1,025,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund had provided the majority of the funding, with the remainder from a number of smaller funders.

The WMHBT commissioned a specialist heritage conservation team to carry out the work, led by architects Brownhill Hayward Brown of Lichfield and contractors Croft Building and Conservation of Cannock.

The project represents an innovative transfer of ownership through the 'Community Asset Transfer' programme of Dudley Council, to take the previously dilapidated buildings into permanent local community ownership, and access heritage funding.

The trust has now leased back the converted offices and events space to the Council's Registrar for public use.

The exhibition has been researched and written by local authors Jean Weston and Marlene Price.

Row is revving up over car park at pitches site

A ROW has erupted over plans to create a new car park at a sports ground in Stourbridge.

Dozens of residents have lodged objections over safety fears again the move at King Edward VI Sports Ground in Oldswinford.

The application is to create 15 new parking spaces on land off Oakleigh Road, near the junction with Love Lane.

But it has led to complaints with many worried about the fact the access to the new car park would be close to a bend.

However, despite the level of concern locally, planners at Dudley Council have recommended the plans for approval when councillors were due to meet this week. They will have to consider the strength of feeling from residents in the area when coming to their decision, which was due to be taken on Tuesday.

A total of 68 letters of objection have been sent to the authority along with a petition signed by 74 people.

Citing their reasons for objection, the protesters there have been a number of near accidents on the road and that there is also a bus stop close to the bend.

Travellers

Various other concerns have also been raised, such as the potential for an increase in on-street parking, cars turning into the car park causing congestion, the potential for travellers to move onto the site and trees being chopped down

Planning experts have said they don't believe the creation of a car park would impact on road safety.

A report prepared ahead of the meeting said: "The proposed development is considered to be acceptable, would not cause such harm to highway safety to justify refusal."

But Stourbridge councillor Nicolas Barlow said he hoped the concerns of residents would be taken into account.

He said: "These sorts of things, access and egress, visibility of cars coming in and out of the car park and road safety really do need to be considered. I know the area pretty well and it is a concern that people feel there will be traffic problems and safety concerns. We have to be mindful of these things."

The car park would serve the playing fields owned by the King Edward VI College. Bosses said the plans had been submitted by trustees.

Families flee due to 'suspect device'

Specialist police deployed a robot as part of the 'suspect device' operation in Oldswinford

A MAN has been released on bail by police after a 'suspect device' was discovered in a flat in Oldswinford, forcing people to be evacuated from their homes.

A road had to be closed for around 12 hours as the bomb squad was called in to investigate the package found at the address in Danford Close, off Hagley Road.

Police were called on Saturday at 12.42pm – and soon put up a 300ft long cordon along the road.

Specialist explosive ordnance disposal officers arrived with a robot to check the package while homes were evacuated. Officers examined a box containing a suspicious device but it was later found to be non-explosive and the cordon was eventually lifted around 1.30am Sunday.

A 25-year-old Stourbridge man was later arrested in Staffordshire and was being questioned by officers. It is understood that the initial call to police was made by an occupant of the flat.

While the cordon was up, dozens of residents, many elderly, were evacuated from their homes as a precaution. Some sought refuge at the nearby Redhill School where food, drink and a place of rest was offered. The Junction Road school is one of a number locations in the Dudley borough which are earmarked as 'emergency sites'.

Several families were also offered the chance to stay the night at the Copthorne Hotel in Merry Hill before returning to their homes on Sunday.

The closure caused traffic problems in Stourbridge, blocking a main route out of the town centre towards Hagley and the M5.

Residents told of their shock. Inge Gordon, who has lived in the street for 22 years, said: "The police officer came to the door and said we only had minutes to leave. My husband is in a wheelchair so the police had to assist him out."

Jeff Upperdine, 64, who was visiting a relative in the street, added: "This is a really nice area with quiet and friendly people and not somewhere you would expect this to happen."

A police spokesman said: "Specialist EOD officers examined a box containing a suspicious device, but it was found to be non-explosive."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Superheroes meet fans at Merry Hill

CAPED crusader against crime Batman will be meeting youngsters at intu Merry Hill shopping centre on Monday.

Parents can book a meet and greet with the superhero at the lower mall, near River Island, from 11am to 3pm. as the school summer holidays get under way.

The shopping centre in Brierley Hill has also confirmed visits from two more superheroes during the school holidays. Wonder Woman will visit the complex on August 16 and Superman on August 22.

Council surgeries are postponed

COUNCILLOR surgeries due to be held tomorrow (Friday) for Quarry Bank have been cancelled.

Councillor Bryan Cotterill said the meetings for residents of Dudley Wood and Quarry Bank had been called off due to 'unforeseen circumstances'.

The surgeries are now due to take place next on August 12 at Dudley Wood Community Centre, Pavilion Gardens, from 6pm to 6.45pm, and also at the sheltered housing office by Woodhouse Court, Sheffield Street, Quarry Bank, 7pm to 7.45pm.

Pensioner is badly injured in accident

AN ELDERLY woman was seriously injured after an accident involving a reversing car in Coseley. The woman, believed to be in her 80s, sustained multiple injuries.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "The woman was conscious and breathing but had sustained multiple serious injuries in the collision." The incident happened on Bourne Street at around 1.10pm on Friday. Anyone with information should call police on 101.

Hotel is sponsoring volunteer awards again

THE Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill has agreed to be main sponsor again this year for the Dudley Volunteers Awards.

The awards, organised by Dudley Council for Voluntary Service, recognises people who give up their time to help others in the borough.

Closing date for nominations this year is August 22 and nomination forms are available online at https://dva2016.wordpress.com/nominate/

Zumba in the park

A DAY of music and dance takes place in Stourbridge on Saturday to raise money for Cancer Research.

Steps to Beat Cancer will be held at Mary Stevens Park from 10am to 12.30pm including a Zumbathon from 10.35am to 12.05. The activities are held near the tennis courts.

It's time to put your foot down on fungal nail infection!

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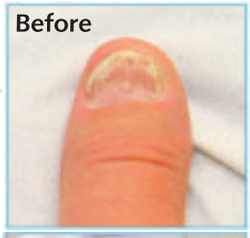

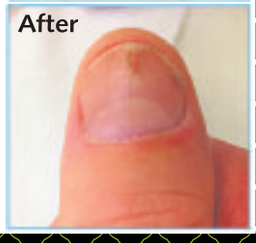

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

BORIS is Foreign Secretary. Cripes.

SO farewell, David Cameron. I never expected to write that quite so soon. I met him on only a few occasions, all before the 2010 General Election. In his early months he was wary, suspicious and unsure of himself, like the young Tony Blair. But he gradually relaxed and grew into the job. Above all, he tended to get on with ordinary people, even when they disagreed with his politics. I cannot recall him ever looking bored or irritated. I liked him. And when Radio 4 announced yesterday that Cameron had left the government front bench "for the last time," I wondered how, after the chaos and upheaval of the past three weeks, anyone could be certain of that. Or of anything.

WE'VE had a letter from E.ON explaining that the adapter on the Chateau Rhodes smart meter is potentially dangerous and should be disconnected without delay. A replacement gizmo will be sent in September. So between now and then we will have no little blue light on the sideboard in the dining room. I do not know how we will cope. To be honest, I've never really understood the purpose of a smart meter from the consumer's point of view. If you wish to be constantly nagged about the need for economy, you could always marry a Yorkshireman. I subscribe to the conspiracy-theory view that, when the wind turbines fail and the electricity runs out, smart meters will inform the power companies which consumers to cut off first. That Rhodes bloke, he's not using much.

ANYONE else notice the resemblance between Mrs May's husband Philip and Calvin's dad in the cartoon strip Calvin & Hobbes?

NEWS reaches me of a much-valued teacher who, on changing jobs, was asked how she would like her presentation silver mug to be inscribed. "Don't forget my name is Rodgers, with a D," she stressed. Sure enough, the mug arrived, beautifully engraved to "Mrs Rodgers-Withadee."

MEANWHILE, a 68-year-old reader tells me he's fed up with the "lies, xenophobia and low-level racism" that conned the English into voting for Brexit. He declares: "If I was younger I would move to Scotland." And in Scotland, of course, you never get a word of bigotry or a whiff of sectarianism. Except on match days.

I STOPPED buying contact lenses from an online company some years ago but they don't give up. Their latest email sales pitch is headlined: "We can send your lenses across Europe." Sounds like a threat from the Mafia, doesn't it?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Property prices fall after Brexit vote

THE price of property coming to the market in England and Wales has fallen 0.9 per cent – £2,647 – according to Rightmove with the West Midlands seeing an even bigger fall of 1.6 per cent.

But the average house price at £205,951, which is up 2.9 per cent from the July 2015 average of £200,129.

Figures from Rightmove show that buyer demand in the two weeks since the EU referendum result is consistent with 2014 although down on 2015.

The same period last year benefitted substantially from a post-General Election boost.

Most agents report market momentum continuing due to shortage of suitable property for sale, buyers fearful of missing out on scarce choice and affordability and availability of low mortgage rates.

Miles Shipside, Rightmove director and housing market analyst, said: "As far as the price of property coming to market is concerned, the fall of 0.9 per cent is within the range that we have seen at this time of year since 2010.

"With the onset of the summer holiday season new sellers typically price more conservatively and the average drop in the month of July is 0.4 per cent over the last six years.

"Perhaps unsurprisingly this July's fall is marginally larger, as political turbulence has a track record of unsettling sentiment. Housing markets do not like uncertainty, with positive sentiment typically driven by confidence and momentum, supported by low borrowing costs."

Taxi drivers angry over policy on window tints

By Judith Hawkins

ANGRY taxi drivers stormed out of a Dudley Council meeting – accusing the authority of 'crippling the trade' in a row over tinted windows.

There were angry exchanges as members of the council's Taxis Committee voted to continue a controversial policy over the use of heavily tinted glass.

The policy sets out how dark the windows in taxis should be. It means the majority of drivers whose vehicles have tinted windows deemed too dark will be forced to either stop using these vehicles or replace the windows within three months.

Speaking on behalf of the drivers, including around 30 at the meeting last week, Shaz Saleem from Dudley Taxi Association told councillors: "You are crippling the trade with this policy, a policy that is out-of-date."

The council's long-standing policy states that private hire and Hackney carriage vehicles must have at least 75 per cent of light passing through the front windscreen, 70 per cent through both front side facing windows, and 40 per cent through all other side facing windows.

Cost

Mr Saleem said: "With your policy at the moment it will restrict us from buying hi-spec cars, which these days are coming with as standard manufactured tinted windows. It is not by choice, they are coming like that."

The policy was under review after tests conducted on behalf of the council mistakenly passed some cars with tinted windows last year, that have since failed this year. Those few vehicles will be the only ones with windows darker than the guidelines allowed to remain in operation.

However this could change when a decision is made on whether to also install CCTV in the taxis, said committee chairman Councillor Richard Body.

Teacher helps book a place in history

Retiring art teacher Jackie Lander looks at the sculpture with students Georgia Wood and Jakob Cassidy

AN art teacher has marked her retirement after 28 years at the same secondary school in Dudley by working with students to create a sculpture in the school grounds.

Jackie Lander, aged 57, is bidding farewell to Summerhill School in Kingswinford at the end of this tern, and wanted to leave her artistic mark before heading off to follow her hobbies, which include whale watching.

She asked each year nine student in the class to make their own ceramic 'book', with their names on the spine, and included one with her own name too as the 27 books were fused together to create the striking sculpture near the school's entrance.

Jackie said: "Everyone will see it coming into the school. At the top it is finished with an open book with the words 'Once Upon A Time', which I think leaves something to the imagination."

Cabbies are living in fear after latest attack

A TAXI driver was left with a broken nose in the latest assault on a cabbie in the Black Country.

It happened at around 4.30am on Sunday in Hagley Road, Stourbridge, and comes five months after another taxi driver, Mohammed Ahmed, was badly beaten in Brierley Hill.

Taxi drivers are now demanding greater protection.

Shaz Saleem, chairman of the Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, said Yassir Mahmood, from Stourbridge, was attacked after he confronted three men who were tampering with a taxi board on the roof of his car.

Mr Mahmood, who is in his 30s and has been a taxi driver for 10 years, was left with a broken nose and bruising.

Mr Saleem said the attack had left the cabbie 'shaken' and he criticised the police response, claiming no officers attended the scene.

Mr Saleem said: "It is a shocking incident. The police rang back and said they would come and see us in two days time. It is just not good enough. We are really not happy."

Mr Saleem said Dudley Council was looking at plans to install CCTV in taxis but more needs to be done.

Chief Inspector Simon Inglis, from Dudley Police, said: "I understand why taxi drivers in Dudley are worried but I would reassure them that this is being treated as an isolated incident and a thorough investigation will be carried out to try and find those responsible."

Shopping centre backing project

MERRY Hill owners Intu and The Conservation Volunteers (TVC) have launched the first Black Country 'Green Gym' at Saltwells Nature Reserve in Quarry Bank.

Green Gyms are a nationwide scheme run by TCV, encouraging people to improve their health and the environment while working on projects that benefit their community.

Intu Merry Hill jointly own a sloping woodland area of Saltwells, complete with woodland, streams and ponds. The Saltwells Green Gym project is funded by Intu and staff from Merry Hill will take part in regular supervised Employee Action Day conservation work at the site, along with the local community and TCV. Work will include clearing vegetation, litter picking and general improvements .

Annual meeting for NHS foundation trust

DUDLEY Group NHS Foundation Trust will hold its annual members meeting today (Thursday) from 4.30pm until 7.30pm at Russells Hall Hospital. To book a place call (01384) 321124 or email foundationmembers@dgh.nhs.uk

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Police make appeal for witnesses to M5 accident

POLICE have launched an appeal for witnesses after a motorcyclist suffered serious injuries after hitting the central reservation of the M5 motorway.

The 57-year-old from Wolverhampton continues to be treated in hospital and is described as in a serious but stable condition, following the crash last Thursday afternoon.

It happened between junction 2 for Oldbury and 3 for Halesowen at around 3.40pm.

Police say the rider was on a red and silver Kawasaki motorbike which hit the central reservation.

The road was closed for several hours and an air ambulance was called to take the rider to hospital.

Officers are appealing for anyone who saw the crash to contact them.

PC Stuart Thorpe, from the regional collision investigation unit, said: "This happened at a busy time of day on a busy stretch of the M5 and we are appealing to any passing motorists who saw what happened to get in touch.

"The motorway was closed for several hours while we dealt with the collision and all lanes were reopened at around 7pm."

"Specialist officers are supporting the family and the driver at this time and investigations continue to establish the circumstances that led to the crash."

Anyone with information is urged to call PC Thorpe or PC Claire Byrne on 101.

Chance to discuss mental wellbeing

DUDLEY and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust will be holding a series of drop-in information events.

They aim to give people the chance to find out more about improving their mental and overall wellbeing within a friendly, safe and comfortable environment.

No booking or appointment is necessary for the sessions which run from 1pm until 2.30pm today (Thursday) at Brierley Hill Library – then on August 25 at Halesowen Library; September 21 at Stourbridge Library; on October 18 at Dudley Library.

For more information contact community development worker Iram Maan on (01384) 366517 or email cdw@dwmh.nhs.uk

Dip into nature at a town park

YOUNG visitors to Dudley's Priory Park can discover what is living in the park's lily pond on Saturday, July 30, during a pond dipping session from 2pm until 3.30pm. Places need to be booked on (01384) 812474.

Race hate crimes increased after Brexit

RACIALLY-AGGRAVATED hate crimes reported to police in the Black Country went up three-fold in the days following the UK's decision to leave the EU.

In the three days following the historic vote, between June 17 and June 19, there were 10 incidents reported across the boroughs of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall. During the same period a week earlier, before the EU referendum, there were just three reports.

The figures were uncovered via a Freedom of Information request and come as increased tensions are reported across the country, including the Black Country.

Walsall Councillor Aftab Nawaz said: "My experience is that since the EU referendum there has been quite a high level of fear in the Eastern European communities. They feel a bit in limbo, while at the same time threatened.

"It upsets me to hear about the division in our area. Much of it is a consequence of the language used in Westminster up to the referendum. The campaigners do not realise the impact they are having."

Harassment

The crimes recorded in the days following the referendum include racially of religiously aggravated common assault, harassment and threats to damage property.

Across the entire West Midlands there was less of an increase in racially aggravated hate crimes, with a total of 29 reported in the three days after the vote compared to 24 in the same period a week earlier.

A spokesperson for West Midlands Police, said: "West Midlands Police is determined to support people who suffer as a result of hate incidents and encourage people to report them. We will not tolerate crimes of hate and prioritise local engagement with those communities who feel vulnerable.

"We did not see a significant rise in hate crime in the days immediately following the referendum result but the situation is being carefully monitored. We have had some incidents that are being investigated."

Dementia centre now set to close its doors

A DAY centre for dementia sufferers is to close because council bosses say not enough people use it.

The Roseville Gateway centre in Coseley supports around 50 people a week but will shut by September 30 following a review of dementia services in Dudley borough.

Council bosses say those who attend the Coseley centre will be transferred to others in the borough – the Brett Young Gateway in Halesowen and the Crystal Gateway in Stourbridge.

They said all three were 'running below expected capacity' and the closure would save £443,000.

Councillor Qadar Zada, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "The council is committed to improving people's wellbeing, maintaining or promoting their independence and reducing the need for formal care support through our dementia gateway service.

"The success of dementia advisors, who provide early help to people when they receive their diagnosis to remain living in their local communities, has resulted in fewer people visiting the borough's three dementia gateways.

Transfer

"Following a review, the decision has been taken to close the Roseville Gateway by September 30. We have written to those who attend the service and we will be supporting them to transfer to Crystal and Brett Young gateways.

"People in Coseley with dementia will still be able to have an assessment of need at home. They will also be able to access the dementia advisor service, which can travel to people's homes to provide tailored support and advice."

Bosses say staff will have the opportunity to move to vacant positions in the borough, or express an interest in voluntary redundancy with compulsory redundancy a last resort.

Dudley Conservative leader Councillor Patrick Harley labelled the move a 'backward step'. He added: "A lot of people use these services, including my own mother, and it is a hell of a job getting them places to attend on a regular basis.

"More money than ever is being pumped into adult social care so I can't see why they are penny-pinching like this. It's short-sightedness, we should be giving more money to organisations like this."

Special delivery for food bank

Food bank manager Mike Crook receives the keys from Chris Lindop and Andrew Lindop of Amlin Motors

A FAMILY-run Black Country firm has donated a van to a food bank to help support vulnerable individuals and families in crisis.

Amlin Motors relocated from its previous home in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, to Maypole Fields, Cradley Heath

Managing director Andrew Lindop said the company was keen to give something back to community to mark the change of premises and thought of the Black Country Foodbank, which is based close to its former showroom.

"The community has been really good to us and we just felt like we needed to give something back," he said.

"The food bank was the closest charity to us when we were at Brettell Lane and another thing is it has also got Black Country in the name.

"All of us here are really proud of our roots. We have got the flag up here and when we go to motor racing events we have all got the Black Country T-shirts on.

"The foodbank needs vans, particularly a little one like the one we handed over, to get to the supermarkets. Admittedly it is not all selfless, we have got our name on the van, so there is a bit of advertising for us there."

Mr Lindop, aged 40, said the firm has invested £1.5 million in the new showroom.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Weekly rubbish collections stay

RUBBISH bins will still be collected once a week across the Dudley borough after proposals by the council's controlling Labour group to switch to fortnightly collections were defeated.

Labour had hoped to save £2.3 million by the movie but could not be sure of forcing through the proposals and was outvoted by Tory and UKIP members.

Conservative group leader Councillor Patrick Harley accused leaders of 'mean service cuts' but Labour members have challenged the opposition to find savings they say need to be made.

Car parts supplier is creating 18 jobs

A CAR parts supplier has opened a new site in Halesowen, creating 18 jobs. Andrew Page has moved to the 17,000 sq ft site in Coombswood Way, which will act as the company's hub and help improve how it handles stock.

Chief executive Martin Saunders said: "The Midlands is a key region for us both in terms of its location from a logistics perspective, as well as the opportunities it brings in reaching additional customers. This site will also help us to expand our operations into Wales."

Building society's boost for charities

THREE Black Country charities are among a thousand in the UK to benefit from a building society's scheme.

YMCA Open Door, Parkinson's UK Dudley and District Branch and Cats Protection, Stourbridge, Dudley and Wyre Forest, have all been awarded a share from the Yorkshire Building Society scheme. Adam Keeley, manager of the society's Stourbridge branch, said "I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who came into the branch to nominate a charity."

Canal trips get award from travel website

A Black Country tourist attraction is celebrating success after being awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for 2016. Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines was given the award for hospitality excellence.

Nick Morris, chief executive officer of Dudley Canal Trust Trips Ltd, said: "This award is a fantastic achievement for all our staff and volunteers. We've had a fantastic year so far in terms of visitor figures since the opening of our new visitor centre, The Portal."

Homes near hospital

TWENTY homes look set to be built on a site near Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

The homes are being proposed for land off Ketley Hill Road and would involve a new access road being built. The plans have been recommended for approval by councillors.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Home bit dowdy? Call in the bulldozers

SO from now on, Prime Minister's Questions will be dominated by squabbles between Jeremy and May, with Hammond sitting in the shadows.

With such a Top Gear bench, as somebody once said, what could possibly go wrong?

❒❒❒

SUPPOSE your house looked a bit the worse for the passage of time. I know that is unlikely, because you maintain your property diligently, keep the garden immaculate, and scrub your doorstep spotless every morning. But just play with me for a while on this one.

Say your property had been allowed to decay for a good few years, and needed quite a bit of modernisation. Nothing serious, it's still habitable, but now it's 50, maybe 60 years old, there are a fair few jobs that need doing; a new heating system here, a bit of rewiring there, the odd plumbing and damp-proofing job.

Anyway, an expert says you probably need to spend £30,000 on it. Or if you ask nicely, his mate Des, who works in the demolition trade, will knock the house down for a third of that.

Now how many of you would say "That's a good idea, it will save us 20 grand on repairs"? Not many I suspect, because then there would be the small matter of you not having a house at all.

Yet this is basically what Dudley Council is doing, after announcing plans to demolish four tower blocks in the Netherton.

The council says urgent maintenance work will cost £9 million, whereas it would cost just £3 million to flatten them and pay off the people who live in them.

People like 90-year-old Lilly Gough, who has lived in her flat for half a century, and is heartbroken at the prospect of leaving.

Of course, it is hardly the only local authority to adopt this policy. Over the past 20 years, tower-block flattening seems to have become something of a municipal sport. People even hold street parties to get into the mood.

A few years ago Wolverhampton Council pulled down the flats at Graiseley, and later complained of a shortage of one and two bedroom properties in the city.

But back to Netherton, where the council will save £6 million but lose 301 flats. That works out at £19,993 a property. I realise the council is strapped for cash, but it's a safe bet it will cost a lot more to build 200 new homes.

We are supposed to be living through a housing crisis. We're told we need to build 240,000 new homes a year just to stand still.

Which makes knocking down hundreds of homes because they need updating – and I suspect partly because they are unfashionable – seem very short-sighted indeed.

Sheila performing while in her 20s

Sheila, third left, in a tap routine during a senior school production

Sheila aged around seven or eight years old

Sheila's long career a real dancing feat

A celebrated Wolverhampton tutor tells reporter **JESSICA LABHART** what it takes to have a long career in dance

SINCE opening her first dance school, in Stafford Road, Wolverhampton at the age of 14, Sheila Groom has gone on to teach hundreds of boys and girls.

Many of her protegees have gone on to secure their own careers in the industry. But what really makes dance such a worthwhile career?

"Well, it began for me really when I was five years old. I had whooping cough, and the doctor at the time told my parents I should do some exercise to try and soothe it. So I started going to a very small dance school in Wolverhampton, just doing tap, because ballet was a bit too far out my parents' reach financially in those days."

Sheila, now aged 86, added: "When I was around six or seven, I moved schools to be taught by Jack Griffiths and Dorothy May. That was when I found out about Shirley Temple, and I would mimic her both in my dancing and the costumes that my mother would handmake for me.

Fees

"At one point, I'd progressed so much in tap that I took the same grade exam as my actual teacher, on the same day! That was when my parents decided it may be time for me to move on.

"Madame Leminski's was a ballet school based at Birmingham New Street when I started taking classes there at 12 years old, I think it's still going, but in Solihull now. I went there every day after school – which was Prestwood Road School in Heath Town, and do a paper round in the morning to pay for my dance fees. In my previous dance schools, I'd developed a bit of a name for myself but at Madame's, I was a nobody. Not only that, but some of the girls that went there had their own chauffeurs and fur coats. I'd come from Bank Street in Park Village – but my mother always made sure I looked just as good as the wealthy girls – it just took a lot of sewing and sequins. My time at Madame's really drove me to work as hard as I could so I could be just as good as the more privileged dancers. I used to save up all my money so I could go to the six week residential session at Maude Wells' school in Forest Gate, London.

Sheila today, aged 86. "Dance is something everyone can do," she says

"Ms Wells had said she had followed my career since I was an infant and she wanted me to go to her from the age of 12, but we couldn't afford it. So every summer I would go to her classes, to keep learning and developing. I kept going to London in the summer, and stayed at Madame's school until I was 22, whilst running my own school at the same time.

"Running the school was dead easy in those days, in comparison to how it is now. The majority of the girls were beginners, so you could teach them all the same material at the same time. Now, not only are so many girls and boys coming to me at different standards, but they come with their own expectation of what dancing is, and that doesn't always match what the rigorous training schedule has to be in order for them to pass the proper exams.

"Now, I often ask the students to bring in a piece of music they want to dance to, particularly for their freestyle exams, so I can chop it and change it and create steps that go with it. We didn't really have that kind of freedom in the old days.

"When I was 23, I got married and decided to have a family. Though I was asked to become an official examiner for the national dance board at that time, I declined it because I didn't want to neglect my two young sons or my husband, so I really focussed on my charity work, and got involved in the Newsvendors Benevolent Fund 'Old Ben' as well as the mayor's various charities throughout the years and later, the MS society.

Among Sheila's achievements are the British Empire Medal she was awarded two years ago. But she said: "For me, it's all about the children.

"I've always believed that, whether you make a career out of it or not, dance will set you in good stead for the rest of your life. Just being able to listen and interpret and enjoy music, being able to follow instruction, having the discipline and commitment to attend classes, and aiming to achieve the best you can are skills that everyone still needs, even today.

"Dance is something that everyone can do, but it takes a lot of hard work to do it well, and like anything in life, the amount of effort you put in is translated into the result you get at the end."

Result

Sheila is a life member of both the Royal Academy of Dance and the International Dance Teachers Association, an Associate Member of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing and a Member of the Guild of Professional Teachers of Dance, Movement to Music and Dramatic Arts. She has a Certificate of Excellence from the Mayor of the City of Wolverhampton, a Bronze Award from the Multiple Sclerosis Society for charity work and the Samaritan Award from the Newsvendors Benevolent Fund.

But it has not been without its mishaps, as she explains: "When I was performing at the Grand in the pantomime in the 1940s, a group of lads I used to go ice-skating with decided to come and watch the show. Except, when they arrived, they stole one of the applause boxes from the side of the stage, so whenever I appeared on stage, there was this thunderous applause – which was highly embarrassing!

"On another occasion, I had this ballet costume which was threaded with fairy lights. Whilst I was dancing, the lights fused, and in the confusion I performed a grand jeté (a ballet leap) but in the wrong direction, so I ended up facing the back of the stage."

For more, visit: http://sheilagroomschoolofdance.co.uk/

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Young people sold out by the older voters

I want to thank the elderly for betraying our children. No wonder young people do not respect you, when you do something like this.

You have no idea what you have done. The stock market has wiped out your pension fund, so if you were considering retiring in the next couple of years forget it, and the pound is breaking records. It is the lowest since 1985. Interest rates will go up. This then could mean inflation will start to rise.

Here is some of the impact on yourselves. I have done some research on your freebies. All these freebies come from the European Social Economic Fund. Are you aware that we take out more than we put in, which means losing your bus passes. You will lose you cold weather payments, free prescriptions, free TV licence and other freebies. The council cannot afford to fund your freebies.

Another factor I can see – Cornwall voted to leave. Remember the Cod War? Well here comes number two. Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden will not like it if Cornish fishermen are caught fishing in their waters. They will send big nasty frigates to humiliate these fishermen and send them on their way.

When Scotland has its second referendum we will become even smaller. Instead of being a big dot on the world map we will be a little dot that no one will see. There is one bright light. UKIP has got what it wanted. This organisation will be no more.

For me and my family life in Tenerife is far better. At least my kids are accepted over there. The only time I will ever come back if Mount Teide blows her top, or hell freezes over.

G FLETCHER
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Welcome to the UK's 'real world'

THE only thing David Cameron gave this country was gay marriage, which the majority of the country were against.

The only reason we had a referendum was to counteract the threat he saw coming from UKIP, not because he wanted to ask the British people their views.

MPs live in a cocoon, away from the world they create. I suggest all MPs spend a month living in the 'little Polands' that they have created in parts of Yorkshire, where doctor's surgeries have to employ interpreters, at a cost of £40 an hour, to deal with this situation. Where houses are occupied by two immigrant families and councils are at breaking point.

The people that MPs hoped would be too dumb to vote have finally had enough. The only party to come out of this with any credibility is UKIP and Nigel Farage.

C LLOYD
Dudley

Brexit is no excuse for race hate crimes

ALONG with many others, I voted to leave the EU. My reasons for this were not racist in any way whatsoever and I have never believed that immigration into Britain or, emigration out of Britain, will in any way be affected by whether or not we are part of the European Union.

Personally, I have no problems or concerns with the current levels of migration. I was, therefore, extremely disappointed (though not necessarily surprised) to learn that there has been an increase in race/hate crimes since the result was announced. It was to be expected, after this increase in hate crimes, that both the chief constable and the police and crime commissioner would come up with their mealy-mouthed platitudes of 'we will monitor the situation closely'. The PCC has stated that hate crime figures for this region have remained steady at 'about 10 a day'. I sincerely hope that both of these men do far more than just monitor the situation and take some very positive action to bring any and all perpetrators to justice. Ten cases a day is about 70 cases a week too many.

It is now beholding on all politicians to work together to carry out the expressed wishes of the people.

C JONES
Brierley Hill

Tighten up control of our borders

THE referendum result looks like a protest vote against the political establishment with immigration being the key factor.

People have always had concerns about how their communities were changing almost overnight but they never were allowed a voice for fear of being branded 'racist'. Consequently many saw the referendum as an opportunity to get their own back and vote to leave the EU.

But will we ever stop the number of people who want to come to Britain? There is talk of an Australian points system when we finally leave the EU, but that won't mean a thing unless we put a seal on our porous borders. Reports suggest migrants are getting here in the backs of lorries, on boats, even somebody who walked through the Channel Tunnel, who remarkably has now been given permission to stay.

A P CUFF
Stourbridge

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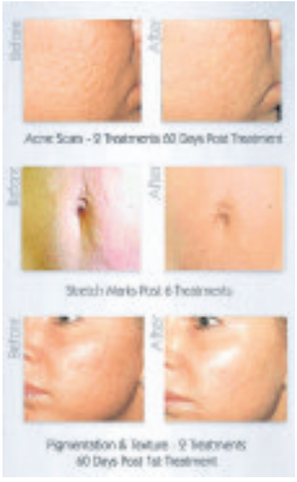

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Tenants worried as council plan demolition of homes

ANGRY residents have hit out at cash-strapped Dudley Council's plans to knock down four high-rise flats in Netherton in a bid to save money.

Hundreds of people could be forced to move if the plans go ahead, which was being decided at Dudley Council's Cabinet meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

Tenants aired their concerns at a public consultation with council officers held at Netherton Arts Centre on Thursday evening.

Council officers revealed the flats – Arley Court, Compton Court, Manor Court and Wells Court – could be knocked down.

The council says it will cost more than £9 million to keep the buildings in their current condition over the next few years but it would cost £3m to demolish the buildings and compensate tenants and leaseholders.

Residents hit out at the meeting saying Dudley Council has failed to carry out repairs following complaints over maintenance concerns such as water leaks.

Among the people opposed to the plans are couple Thomas William Gough, aged 88, and Lilly Gough, 90, who live in Wells Court for nearly half a century. Thomas said: "We have lived here for 49 years, from when the flats were first built. We don't want to move." Lilly added: "We love it here."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of the opposition Conservative group, said he would welcome developers or landlords to take the flats off the council and bring them up to standard.

He said: "I think we should be more active in finding a developer who would look to take them off our hands and bring them up to a good standard."

Dudley Council will speak to residents one to one if demolition is approved.

Cricket stars ready to hit fans for six

STARS of Worcestershire County Cricket Club's championship winning sides of the 1960s and 1980s are joining forces for a unique evening of cricket memories in aid of county captain Daryl Mitchell's benefit, which is taking place throughout the year.

'The Time of Their Lives' event on July 29 will see Norman Gifford, Roy Booth, Duncan Fearnley, Steve Rhodes and Phil Neale regale the audience with tales from a golden era – including stories behind the successes and dressing room anecdotes.

The entertainment gets under way at the county's iconic New Road ground in Worcester at 8pm. Broadcaster Dave Bradley will undertake the legendary Eamonn Andrews 'This is Your Life' role.

Tickets are £8 in advance or £10 on the night.

They can be arranged by calling Mark Ashbourne on 07506 747619 or by emailing mitchbenefit2016@gmail.com

Wolves fans get value on memorabilia

Steve Plant, of Stourbridge, shows expert David Harper a shirt from 1910

WOLVES fans were united at a special event to value their club memorabilia.

Dozens of fans flocked to Molineux to get a price on their possessions at a valuation day.

Expert David Harper, a regular on the BBC's Bargain Hunt, looked over the items. He said: "I suppose I'm better known for evaluating general antiques, but I'm in Wolverhampton to talk about football and I've met the the most passionate people here who really love Wolves – I just couldn't believe it."

"My job is to give the stories, explain where these objects are from and put the valuation on them and that's been dead easy here because they've been teaching me all the history and all the tales. We've found some cracking objects."

Kevin Poole, aged 49, from Upper Gornal, took along his collection of programmes dating back to the 1940s. He said: "I was left these by my uncle who I think must have attended all of these games. It's such a shame to leave them in the attic when they mean so much to the fans and the club.

"That's why I've brought them down. Altogether, the professional valuator said they could fetch up to £600."

The event was also attended by some famous Wolves faces, including record goalscorer Steve Bull. He said: "I think it's important for children, fans and people of Wolverhampton to find out more about how the club started. I'm still learning and I'm in my 50s."

Crash victim riding a stolen motorcycle

A 17-year-old who had been disqualified from driving died after crashing a stolen motorbike into a parked car.

Am inquest heard that Brandon Holt lost control of the Yamaha after going over a speed bump on Wrens Nest Road in Dudley just after 6.10am on Sunday, May 29. The teenager, who did not steal the motorbike himself, had cocaine in his system and was not wearing any safety gear.

He had also been disqualified from driving in March 2015, Black Country Coroner's Court was told.

He had crashed into a stationary Fiat Punto at more than 20mph forcing the vehicle up on to the kerb. Collision investigator Pc Justin Williams said he was unable to calculate how fast Brandon was travelling on the 30mph road before hitting the speed bump.

The teenager, of Hillside Road, was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham but died later that day. A pathologist confirmed cause of death as abdominal injuries.

The court heard the bike had been stolen that morning and police had since found and dealt with the culprit.

Senior coroner Zafar Siddique recorded a verdict of death as a result of a road traffic collision.

Brandon's brother Mitch Holt said: "He could be naughty but he had a heart of gold. He was my best friend."

Moggy is rescued from block of flats

FIREFIGHTERS were needed to rescue a cat in Brierley Hill after it got stuck. The hapless moggy lost its nerve after it got out of a window of a flat on Foxdale Drive on Friday evening but was unable to get back in or make its own way down.

Two crews from Brierley Hill attended around 7pm. The first vehicle's ladders were not long enough prompting a call out for the main engine.

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Two MPs get senior posts in Government

KINVER'S MP Gavin Williamson was appointed the Government's chief whip when new Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May embarked on a Cabinet reshuffle during her first full day in power.

The South Staffordshire MP, who has been an MP since 2010 and was previously David Cameron's Parliamentary private secretary, will take charge of party discipline.

He described the role as 'not bad' as he left Downing Street after accepting his appointment from the Prime Minister. He will now take up residence at 12 Downing Street.

Mr Williamson, who played a major role behind the scenes in Mrs May's rise to power as her campaign manager, replaced outgoing chief whip Mark Harper. His immediate task will be keeping control of MPs coming to terms with Mrs May's new-look Cabinet, a move considered vital considering the Tories' slender majority in the House of Commons.

Stourbridge MP Margot James has been handed a ministerial appointment in the new Government.

Business

Ms James was one of the first MPs to back Theresa May's leadership bid for the Conservative Party in the wake of Mr Cameron announcing his resignation. In the week of the EU referendum, Mrs May travelled to Stourbridge for a debate hosted by Ms James.

Ms James has been appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

She said: "I will do all I can to support businesses and employees in my new role."

Margot James – major business role

New chief whip Gavin Williamson

MP hears about school plans

SOUTH Staffs MP Gavin Williamson visited Kinver High School to hear about their refurbishment plans.

The Conservative MP, who has just been appointed Government chief whip (see above), met with headteacher Chris Rogers and pupils who told him about plans for a new teaching block.

Mr Williamson had been heavily involved in the campaign for money from the Condition Improvement Fund to be granted to the school.

It follows the Government's announcement of £435 million in funding for 1,276 projects at 1,030 academies and sixth-form colleges.

Mr Williamson also heard about the Invictus Education Trust which Kinver High School has become part of.

The MP said: "I was delighted to hear about exciting new building plans. Our pupils in South Staffordshire deserve the best start in life and this funding will go some way to helping with this."

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Keep your donnies off my flag, Bill tells the EU

A BLACK Country UKIP Euro MP has warned 'interfering EU busybodies' not to show their 'fizzogs' in his European Union office after receiving a warning over displaying the Black Country flag.

Dudley's Bill Etheridge has proudly flown the flag from the window of his Brussels office for weeks, but on the eve of Black Country Day the MEP was told to take it down for allegedly breaching EU rules.

Mr Etheridge, who is also a Sedgley councillor, said he was 'furious' and branded EU bosses 'disgraceful' for asking him to take the flag down .He has refused to remove the flag and says he will 'continue to fly it with pride.

A warning letter sent to Mr Etheridge states: "Notices and posters shall not undermine the dignity of Parliament and under no circumstances shall they be offensive or of an inflammatory nature or contradictory to the values on which the Union is founded."

Security

The letter warns infringement of the rules would lead to such material being removed by ushers or the security services at the Parliament.

Mr Etheridge, who campaigned for Britain to leave the EU, said: "So the EU think a flag identifying the proud cultural heritage of the Black Country may be deemed offensive? What an insult. I find the heavy-handed, constant interference of these EU busybodies offensive and disgraceful. Should there be any attempt to remove the flag they will receive a traditional Black Country response from me. Any lummocks planning to remove the flag better pin back their lugholes – I don't want their donnies anywhere near it. It is best that they don't show their fizzogs in my office."

MEP Mr Etheridge with Black Country flag outside the window at his Brussels office

Etheridge wants to lead UKIP

WEST Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge has launched his bid to become Nigel Farage's successor as leader of UKIP.

The Sedgley councillor spoke of his hopes in bringing Britain together by being 'the party for everyone' and making the West Midlands proud.

Speaking at the launch at The Seven Stars pub in Sedgley, Mr Etheridge said he wanted a reduction in 'sin taxes' on alcohol and cigarettes, and to implement a firmer approach on crime.

He said: "I want us to represent the view of the people against the establishment. I want changes and I think people are unhappy with how lenient we are with crime, and by seeing lots of money go away in taxes and then questioning where it has gone.

"I'm not going to be the next Nigel Farage but I do want to be the first Bill Etheridge. It is time to move on. I want us to be more considered and understand the will of the people as the party for everyone."

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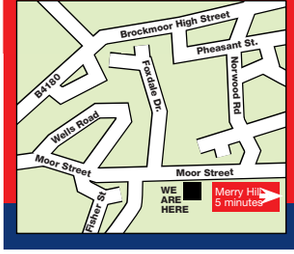

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Builders have got Connor's fundraising all wrapped up

KIND-HEARTED builders at a Dudley housing development bandaged themselves up for a day to raise money in aid of a co-worker's baby boy.

Connor Davies, the 15-month-old son of forklift truck driver Steve Davies, was born with a heart condition and has had several operations at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Staff at the David Wilson Homes' Baggeridge Village development decided to get involved and raise more than £2,500 for the hospital.

Mr Davies and his colleagues took part in its Big Bandage event whilst at work on July 8, wrapping themselves – and even Steve's forklift – in bandages.

Mr Davies, aged 49, of Wolverhampton, said: "I'm overwhelmed by the support from my colleagues and my family.

"I would like to thank them, particularly site manager Wayne Berry, and everyone else who's contributed their time and money to the charity."

More than 200 bandages were donated by local medical supply companies and they were used to create a huge bandage to wrap round Steve's forklift for the day.

Mr Berry, site manager for David Wilson Homes Mercia, said: "When we heard what Steve was doing for little Connor, we were all very moved, and decided to help out.

"It's been a fun way to raise money for a good cause, and we've all had a good laugh onsite getting mummified."

Anyone wanting to donate money to support the hospital's charity can do so by visiting www.bch.org.uk website.

Forklift driver Steve Davies, with his son Connor and daughter Jessica, receives £2,500 from work colleagues

NHS boss on the run to help patients

AN NHS boss will run past all of the big Black Country hospitals to raise funds to help patients.

Terry Whalley, the Black Country Alliance's (BCA) programme director, will run 21 miles to raise money for dementia care at the three trusts that form the Black Country Alliance in Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell and West Birmingham. He will run from Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley to Sandwell General in West Bromwich before making his way to Walsall Manor Hospital. He will then keep on running to City Hospital in Birmingham via the site of the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick. Mr Whalley will complete the challenge on August 13.

He said: "I have never run this far before but I am training hard and I'm determined to run the full distance, if slightly nervous.

"As well as raising money through sponsorship towards dementia care I also want to raise awareness of the Black Country Alliance."

For more information call Terry on 0121 507 5915, 07773 624205 or email terry.whalley@nhs.net.

Secondary schools' standards 'too low'

STANDARDS of secondary school education in the Black Country are 'unacceptably low' according to the regional head of school inspectors Ofsted.

Lorna Fitzjohn, head of Ofsted in the West Midlands, has written an open letter to four councils in the region as well as academy trusts and MPs.

Ms Fitzjohn said that the achievements of pupils by the time they reached the age of 16 were 'poor' in comparison to other regions in the UK.

By Jessica Labhart

Ms Fitzjohn also said there is a 'wide' gap between GCSE achievements of disadvantaged pupils and their better-off counterparts.

She said secondary schools were regularly failing to build on the success of pupils in primary schools with 'much of their progress going to waste'.

The watchdog said that 76 schools in the Black Country, 53 (or 70 per cent), were academies and the rest local authority-maintained. However, Ms Fitzjohn said the concerns were 'prevalent in both types of schools'.

Worst

She said: "Of 151 local authorities, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton are among the worst 25 in England for GCSE attainment.

"Dudley fares little better and is among the worst 35 local authorities in the country for secondary school attainment."

Councillor Ian Cooper, of Dudley's children's services, said: "We are already focussing on areas in need of improvement and have discussed our priorities for getting standards in the secondary sector back on track with both Ofsted and the Department for Education.

"We have also brought in a new schools leadership team to the authority who have been working very closely in partnership with our schools in the School Improvement Alliance."

Ms Fitzjohn has now called for urgent action to take place to address the problems.

Julien Kramer, Wolverhampton's director of education, said: "We accept that still more needs to be done to improve standards still further and we are rising to the challenge.

Councillor Rose Burley, from Walsall's education services said: "We are confident that our existing schools improvement programme will deliver sustainable improvements."

Councillor Simon Hackett, of Sandwell's children's services, said: "We are working very closely with all our secondary schools."

Ready, steady, bake for hospice fundraiser

KEEN bakers are invited to whip up their most show-stopping creations for a lively afternoon of sweet treats and sunshine at the 'Great Sanderson Court Bake Off'.

The baking competition is being held at McCarthy and Stone's Sanderson Court development in Hagley on Saturday in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice.

All entries will be sampled and adjudicated by a panel of judges including Chairman of Bromsgrove Council, Councillor Helen Jones; General Manager at the Lyttleton Arms, Chris Cunningham; and Laura Millard from the Mary Stevens Hospice.

Guests are welcome to attend between noon and 4pm, with judging to take place at 1pm.

Bakers will be charged £2 for entry and can also try their luck in the raffle, which will include prizes such as a meal for two at the Lyttelton Arms, with all proceeds donated to the Mary Stevens Hospice.

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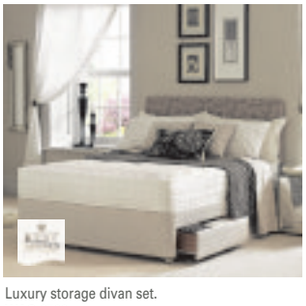

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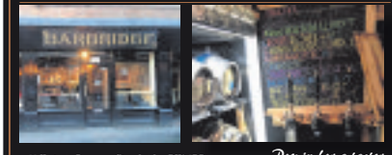

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Sedgley are guild quiz champions

West Mids Federation

THE West Midlands Federation celebrated the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth with an afternoon tea party for their Guild members at Wollaston Village Hall.

The entertainment was provided by 'The Black Country Nightingale' vocalist Beryl Briscoe who gave a performance of her favourite songs from popular shows before tea was served. The choice of songs was excellent and enjoyed by everyone.

Tea was then served with a wide variety of sandwiches, cakes and individual trifles which were all served by the Federation Committee and their helpers.

The afternoon was completed with another performance by Beryl who sang many popular songs from the war years with everyone joining in.

The vote of thanks was given by Betty Davies. Chairman Margaret Tew thanked everyone for coming and hoped that they had enjoyed the afternoon. A vote of thanks was given to the committee for all their hard work and voted the afternoon a huge success.

The annual Inter-guild quiz was held at Stourbridge Football and Social Club. Twelve teams consisting of four guild members per team took part.

Sedgley E Guild were first with 95 points with Bewdley second with 81, followed by Wordsley M on 80. The shield was presented to Sedgley by Mrs Tew. Prizes were awarded to first and second team members.

Black Country wit and poetry enjoyed

Speakers's secretary Pauline Handley, speaker David Bartley and Josey Hunt

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

CHAIRMAN Mary Jones welcomed 33 members to The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley to enjoy their excellent three-course lunch and welcome back David Bartley with his Black Country poems and humour.

He had everyone laughing from beginning to end, with lots of audience participation, choosing one lady in particular by the name of Dinky White to help with his stories. He was asked to come back yet again at an early opportunity.

Unfortunately the normal coffee morning at the home of Ann & Mike Rogers on the second Friday in August has had to be cancelled due to roadworks and driveway closures at their home. This was rescheduled for Wednesday November 23. The next luncheon will be on Friday, September 16 one week later than normal – and the speaker will be Nikki Southall on Clarins skincare. By special request Mark Newbold is returning to talk about The Falklands Re-visited on October 14.

Visitors are most welcome and can attend three times before deciding to join.

For further information call the secretary on 01902 372984 or contact the chairman at maryjones30@sky.com

Insight into vintage jewellery

Wollaston E TWG

THE June meeting was opened with a welcome by chairman Julie Willetts. This was followed by Secretary Sue Ward, who read thank you letters from Margaret Tew and Oldswinford Guild, for their invitations to the open evening.

It was agreed by all who attended that the annual dinner had been a great success, and thanks went to organiser Sue Ward.

Regarding the bowls section, the club has almost completed the first round of competition, and it was nice that a few members represented the club, together with the Sons of Rest, at a Mary Stevens Park fun day. The speaker cancelled, but was replaced by two ladies from Granddad's Attic who gave an insight into vintage jewellery, etc, under the title of An Evening of Nostalgia.

The competition was won by Julie Willetts and Elizabeth Grove and the raffle by Valerie Harper and Marion Clarke.

Zoo offers youngsters a real wild time

Dudley Zoo is bringing back its really wild summer schools by popular demand, between August 6 and 26

ANIMAL-MAD youngsters are being given the chance to enrol for a summer school with a difference.

Dudley Zoo is running a packed programme of 'really wild summer schools' due to popular demand.

Children aged eight to 11 can sign up to Go Wild! Week while Zooversity is on offer for 12 to 15 year-olds.

Go Wild! Week will run from August 6 to August 12 and from August 15 to August 19, while Zooversity will take place from August 22 to 26.

Dudley Zoo conservation officer Chris Leeson, said: "We're really excited to be bringing back the Summer Schools again this year. We've got lots of activities planned for the school sessions."

These include critter hunts, animal feeding and abode building, pond dipping, bug hunts, horrible history and an I'm A Celebrity session for the older group.

Experience

"It promises to be a great experience for animal-mad youngsters, so sign up soon, as places are limited," he said.

Places at the summer schools cost £130 per child for the five-day week. Call (01384) 215313.

The zoo is also offering anyone who ever wondered what happens after the site closes a twilight trail, so visitors can see what happens as keepers settle the animals down for the night. The event tomorrow night (Friday), will include a behind-the-scenes guided tour.

Visitors will be able to hear about the zoo's vital conservation work as they shadow keepers during their lock-up duties, preparing supper for the animals and getting them ready for night. The tour lasts approximately two hours, starting at 5.45 pm, and ends with a barbecue in the castle courtyard. Places need to be booked.

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Church group's name used by scammers again

A CHURCH group that became the target of con artists pretending to collect money on their behalf has now been subject to another swindle.

St John's Church Preservation Group in Dudley was informed that a fraudster was ringing their suppliers in an attempt to gain a discount.

It comes after callers knocked on doors in the Kates Hill area and conned people out of around £300 in cash after claiming they were collecting for the group.

Deb Brownlee, chairman of the group, said the latest con was 'heartbreaking'.

Mrs Brownlee said she was told about the latest scam by someone who had taken a call for a booking from someone claiming to be a trustee of the charity.

She said: "Following hot on the heels of bogus collectors going door to door collecting in the name of our charity, we now find someone ringing one of our regular suppliers pretending to be one of our trustees for reasons we can only assume to be to obtain a discount.

Despairing

"We never saw this coming and are despairing at the fraud going on in our name. We can only urge people to please contact us direct if they have any approach from anyone saying they are connected with St John's Church Preservation Group. To have unscrupulous people trying to cash in is heartbreaking."

The con comes as a blow to the group, which is nearing the final stages of its restoration project to re-open the Grade II-listed church, that closed in 2002, for worship and community use.

The group hopes to finally secure the lease for the building in the coming weeks. They urge anyone approached for donations to get in touch with them on 0787 119 5042 or email savestjohnschurch@hotmail.co.uk. Anyone with information about the scammers should contact police on 101.

Jumbo fun at safari park

Baby elephant Sutton enjoys being sprayed with water as playful pachderms splash around in their own paddling pool at the park near Bewdley

ELEPHANTS at the West Midland Safari Park have been creating their own waterpark fun, which visitors can watch during the summer holiday period.

This year the Summer Nights event at the park near Kidderminster has been extended to cover the whole of the school summer holidays. This will start from July 23 and run through to September 4 with increased opening hours from 9am to 9pm.

This will be good news for the three playful African elephants who reside in Elephant Valley at the park. For 24-year-old Five, 23-year-old Latabe and two-year-old bundle of fun, Sutton, enjoy nothing more than playing with water, including an elephant-sized paddling pool just on their doorstep.

Head keeper Andy Plumb said: "Like any toddler, Sutton loves to play, especially when it involves Mum. They splash around, throw water onto themselves and use their trunks to suck and blow out the water, which always looks spectacular."

For details about the park see www.wmsp.co.uk

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Gotta catch 'em all in the Pokémon hotspots

MOBILE phone in hand, moving quickly from landmark to landmark and cheering spontaneously in the street.

Millions of people are joining the new phenomenon – Pokémon Go – which is sweeping through the country after its launch last week.

The aim of the game is to capture, battle, and train virtual Pokémon who appear throughout the real world via the player's device's GPS system and camera. It uses the location of the player's phone/device to pin-point where the nearest checkpoints (called PokéStops) and animated Pokémon characters are.

The player can then follow the game on their phone/device, whilst walking in the real world, to try and 'catch 'em all'.

Landmarks

Pokémon have so far appeared in a variety of locations across the region, though the game has only just been officially released in the UK.

Landmarks throughout the area have unwittingly found themselves included in the online game, which sees real world venues become the 'home' of virtual world animated Pokémon characters for players to collect. And apparently Wolverhampton is a hotspot. People are taking to the city streets in hope of catching a Charmander, Wiggylypuff or Pidgeotto.

Games Design student at the University of Wolverhampton, Russell Walls, aged 21, was playing the game in Queens Square. He said: "Pokémon Go is basically this app that came out and I think it's a great thing. It's getting everyone who have been stuck in their rooms out and about and meeting new people. Wolverhampton is probably one of the hotspots in the West Midlands. As a games design student I would say it is a wondrous thing."

Other hotspots across the region included in the game so far include Morrisons on Blaydon Road, Pendeford. Pokémon Go have confirmed that the chain are the only supermarkets in the UK that contain Pokémon.

Sedgley has become a hive of Pokémon Go activity too. The White Horse, The Grand Junction, The Courthouse, the local Scout hut, Sedgley Library are all Poké centres. Sedgley church gardens also has a registered Poké gym and is home to a range of grass type Pokémon for players to catch.

Dudley Zoo has shown that not only is it the perfect place to spot rare wildlife, it's also the perfect place for Pokémon too.

The zoo has been registered as a gym where trainers can battle it out, with various Pokémon being spotted on paths and even in enclosures joining the real world animals.

Pokémon found at Dudley Zoo, where there will be reduced priced admission on Pokémon Fridays during August for monster hunters

Hundreds of entrants lined up for Harry's Potter Charity Walk 2016 to raise funds for Harry

Hundreds Potter along to step up Harry fund

MORE than 250 people walked, ran and cycled between two hospitals in support of an annual fundraiser to help a young boy with cerebral palsy.

The event, Harry's Potter, was in aid of four-year-old Harry Morgan-Shirley from Codsall.

People were able to choose to take part in an 18-mile walk, an 18-mile run or a 35-mile cycle ride between the Princess Royal Hotel in Telford to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Nick Holding, organiser, said he was 'thrilled' with how well the event went. "There was a great atmosphere and everyone was very enthusiastic," he said. "This is the fifth year we have been doing the fundraiser now and we are already making plans on how we can make it bigger and better next year."

The charity trek has so far raised more than £65,000 over four years.

Nick added: "This year we had four runners taking part – one of them finished the route in less than two hours which was impressive. We also had about 70 cyclists and some were very good. However it was not a competitive event and most took it easy.

"As well as raising money for Harry, there are 14 other charities being supported by people taking part in the walk."

Harry's mother works at the PRH and the money will go towards him receiving life-changing surgery to help him to walk.

To donate to Harry's fund, go to www.justgiving.com/harrywillwalk

Brave – Harry Morgan-Shirley

Black Country encouraged to get contracts

BUSINESSES across the Black Country are being given a helping hand to bid for £13 billion worth of contracts to build High Speed 2, the fast new rail link for London, Birmingham and northern England.

The Black Country Growth Hub – a partnership of public and private sector business leaders – is launching a support programme focussing on supplying parts or services for the £55.7 billion scheme.

Hub member Wayne Langford believes businesses in the region are perfectly positioned to take advantage of HS2's arrival.

He said: "There will be thousands of opportunities within the HS2 supply chain across many business sectors, requiring a range of capabilities, suitable for suppliers of all sizes and generated over a number of years.

Support

"Along with colleagues, we've developed a programme of support to help businesses understand the procurement process and prepare themselves to be ready for when opportunities materialise.

"The West Midlands has long been home to some of the UK's most advanced engineering and manufacturing firms, so businesses here really stand benefit most from an infrastructure project on the scale of HS2."

Figures are flying high at Birmingham Airport

PASSENGER numbers hit a new monthly high of 1.1 million at Birmingham Airport last month. June was the airport's 16th consecutive month of record-breaking growth. In total 1,118,452 people were recorded travelling through the airport last month, up by 13.1 per cent on the same month last year. Meanwhile, up to 300 jobs are on their way to the airport after budget airline and holidays group Jet2 unveiled investment.

RSPCA brace themselves for increase in abandoned pets

NEARLY 750 animals were abandoned in the West Midlands last year, figures from the RSPCA reveal.

This includes 511 abandoned in the Black Country and Birmingham areas and 136 in Staffordshire. The other 98 animals were abandoned in Warwickshire, including Coventry.

The country's leading animal charity has released the figures as it enters its tricky summer months when, on average, one animal is dumped every hour somewhere in the UK. In 2015, 2,751 animals were rescued by the animal welfare charity, which saw a peak in admissions in July.

Now, the RSPCA is bracing itself for another summertime influx of abandoned animals. It is thought that one contributing factor is some owners heading off on holiday and not finding anyone to look after their pet.

Simon Osborne, a superintendent at the RSPCA, said: "People often think that Christmas is the time we see the most abandoned animals but it is actually the summer.

Heartbreaking

"Every day our inspectors face cases where animals have been left abandoned in fields, dumped in boxes, left for dead at the side of roads and even left outside our animal centres.

"It is just heartbreaking. We will never know why these animals are just discarded like rubbish. Whether the novelty of their Christmas present pet has worn off, they don't want the responsibility of finding someone to look after their pet while away on holiday or whether more pets are found dumped because of longer daylight hours, we will never know.

"There is a real peak in the number of abandonments in the summer months and it is animal welfare charities like us at the RSPCA that are left to pick up the pieces. There is a huge strain on our resources at this time of year because of this."

Headteacher never tired of the job

Pupils at Huntingtree Primary School in Halesowen have a tea party to celebrate the retirement of head teacher Stevie Parkes

SHE followed her father into banking but her passion to make a difference to children's lives saw her make a career change for teaching.

Stevie Parkes went on to work at three primary schools in the Dudley borough, having a hand in the education of thousands of pupils.

Now, 40 years after becoming a teacher, Mrs Parkes is retiring and leaving her 25-year post as headteacher at Huntingtree Primary School, Halesowen. Pupils marked the occasion with a tea party.

Mrs Parkes, aged 68, said: "I always wanted to do everything I could to enhance children's lives. I want to develop their skills and provide them with the opportunity to do what they want in the future. For me, it is not about the test results, it is making a difference in young people."

Born and raised in Stourbridge, she attended St Joseph's Catholic School, before a spell in Leicester before returning to the town to attend Stourbridge Girls' High School. She went to work for her father's employer, Midland Bank, in Stourbridge town centre but two years later made a career change, training at Shenstone Teacher Training College, Bromsgrove.

In 1975 she started as a teacher at Gig Mill Infants, Stourbridge. Two years later she moved to Quarry Bank Primary and became deputy head. Then 25 years ago she was appointed headteacher at Huntingtree Primary.

She said: "It's been a wonderful career. I'm only retiring because the time is right, not because I'm tired of the job."

Not plain trains but automobiles

FOUR-WHEELED transport is set to steal the show at the Severn Valley Railway, as the attraction's popular Classic Vehicle Day returns on Sunday.

Sharing the limelight on this occasion, the railway's heritage locomotives will be taking passengers along the 16-mile span to enjoy the array of classic vehicles of all shapes and sizes, on display at stations along the line.

More than 140 classics will be showcased during the day, with more than 100 being pre-1970 and nearly 40 of those dating from before 1950. The oldest cars on display are expected to be a 1926 Cluley at Kidderminster and a 1924 Rolls-Royce at Arley. For more information call 01562 757900.

Meanwhile, some 100 classic cars will be rolling into the historic grounds of Dudley Castle for the West Midlands Classic Car Club event on Sunday. For the 28th year running, it will be held in the castle courtyard. The vehicles will be on display between 10am until 4pm

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 21, 2016

Still sitting pretty with vintage lace at auction

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway, of Perry & Phillips

A NUMBER of years ago, when everyone aspired to have a Laura Ashley-style home, lace was massively popular and was snapped up very quickly both at auction and in antiques centres.

Since then its appeal waned as design trends changed.

Now, however, we're seeing its fortunes wheel around as once again lace items seem to be appealing to the buyers.

And remember that lace doesn't have to be restricted to period homes or country cottages, it can look really good in a contemporary property.

There are all kinds of lovely lace-trimmed items to look out for that will look great in rooms throughout the home.

For a dining room or dining kitchen there are cotton and lace runners, table cloths, table centres and napkins.

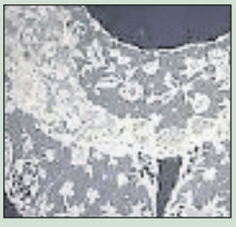
In the sitting room you could use cushion covers and small mats, and in a bedroom lace-trimmed valences, nightdress cases and lace-edged pillow slips.

Other small items such as lace gloves and handkerchiefs are pretty to display in a guest room, and it is possible to pick up odd pieces of vintage lace that you can then attach to your own fabric.

And it's not just for our homes that we like lace – for centuries it's been an essential fashion accessory.

Many people look out for pieces of old lace to use in dress-making, to add a vintage touch to a contemporary item.

Vintage lace wedding dresses sell for very good prices – providing they are in pristine condition (brides tend to want perfection on their wedding day).



A 1920s 'tea-stained' lace wedding dress sold recently on the internet for £230 and a beautiful Edwardian lace wedding dress went for £1,250.

Lace has been around for a long time – paintings show that it was used on clothing as early as the 1600s and we see portraits of Queen Elizabeth I wearing some spectacular ruffs and Marie Antoinette sporting elegant lace-trimmed dresses. Originally, lace was made from silk, linen, silver and even gold thread but gradually it became more affordable as cotton was used instead.

Hundreds of years ago lace-making was a cottage industry but in the 1800s lace-making machines were introduced, making lace much more affordable and generally available.

The 'original' lace was usually made using bobbins or needle and thread and today many 'hobby' lace-makers employ the same techniques.

Telling the difference between hand-made and machine lace can be very difficult, even for a collector.

The experts say you need a magnifying glass to identify 'clear lines' amongst the threads, this will indicate a hand-made item.

And of course, vintage lace is often sewn onto a modern piece of fabric so you get a 'marriage' of old and new.

Check the condition of very old lace before you buy it, it may have been beautifully made originally but subject to wear and tear over the years.

Perry and Phillips Auctioneers hold sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, in Low Town, Bridgnorth from 10am until 4pm.

Phew! Prom season delivers many demands

The dress has to be just perfect

IT was prom week in most of our schools last week.

A time when the school year comes to an end and the stress is no longer caused by exams but instead what to wear for the occasion of the year.

It draws to a close a crazy time of year for me where I am extremely busy with alterations and making bespoke prom dresses.

'THE dress', designed from a mix of various photos on the internet, required in a particular colour and fabric with added bling….no thought for the final cost.

Dresses purchased from websites with super model photos, the reality arriving in the wrong size, different colour, and needing various alterations.

Dresses purchased from shops requiring a sleeker shape, a tighter bodice, the length shortened, the list is endless, my order book full and for the parents extremely costly.

The prom can be traced back to banquets arranged in American universities in the 19th Century held for the year's graduating class.

The word prom is short for promenade, the promenading of guests at a party.

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

In the 1950's the traditional prom usually held in the school sports hall was replaced by a dance at local hotels and venues. During the 2000's US TV's shows made proms popular here and they become more important and more elaborate each year.

Accessories

For parents with daughters at prom age it is an expensive time and the planning amounts to weeks of detailed organising.

The dress, the hair and make-up (including a trial run), spray tan, the shoes, bag, jewellery, transport and then surprisingly, the after party dress and accessories, and the parents with sons do not escape lightly, the suit, shirt, tie and shoes have to be 'just right' and designer label.

Retailers selling garments for the prom season have to be savvy and well organised, the same dress must not be sold to more than one person attending the same event.

How often I wonder is the same dress purchased by two girls from different retailers, only to have their evening completely spoilt when they meet on the night!

I have even heard of girls not attending because the right dress just cannot be found.

Each year a trend features strongly, 2015 saw lots of red jersey dresses with beaded waists and plunging necklines.

This year navy is the outright winner, higher necklines are popular with open backs, sprinkled with diamante, straighter styles with a small train at the back or alternatively pale summery colours with full floating hemlines and tight gathered glittering bodices worn with towering high heels.

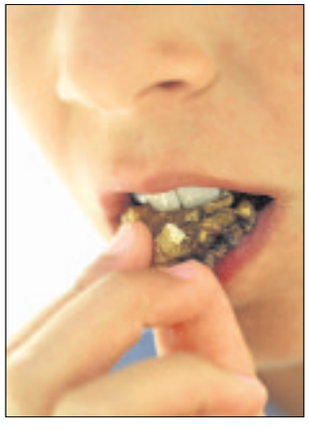
Next year will bring another new style, a new list of challenges and many an empty wallet.

For more details visit www.jflexclusive.com, www.jflgarmentsolutions.co.uk

Follow: jfllifeandloves on tumblr

If you keep an eye on portion sizes and avoid unhealthy additions like salt and sugar, nuts can be a healthy choice between or with your meals

Nutty discovery which can boost your health



A handful of nuts will curb your hunger

IT can be hard to get through the day without a snack or two, and all too often these come in the unhealthy form of biscuits, cakes or crisps. Want to curb between-meal hunger pangs and bolster your health in the process? Lisa Salmon makes a nutty discovery...

Report by Karen Evans

A handful of nuts could curb those snack-cravings – and boost your health at the same time. Not only will their concentrated protein content help you feel fuller for longer, but they could protect you from a whole host of illnesses.

A new study has found that patients with prostate cancer who consumed nuts five or more times a week after diagnosis, had a 34% lower rate of mortality than those who ate nuts less than once a month.

And last year, a Dutch study found a link between daily nut consumption and a reduced chance of dying from several chronic diseases, including cancer and heart disease.

SUPER NUTS?

Nuts are packed with protein, fibre and important vitamins and minerals, including – in differing proportions depending on the type of nut – calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, vitamin E and B vitamins and selenium, the powerful antioxidant thought to help fight cancer, and which may also play a role in combating infertility, dementia and low thyroid function.

Nuts have a high fat content, but it's the 'healthy' type – unsaturated – which is thought to help lower 'bad' LDL cholesterol levels.

Of course, a packet of roasted, salted nuts is not the same 'healthy snack' as some plain, raw almonds, for example. Dieticians advise avoiding nuts that are packaged, salted or roasted in oil or honey; instead, eat them raw or dry-roasted.

FIGHTING CANCER

Although the recent Harvard study found death rates among men with prostate cancer were more than a third less when they ate nuts regularly, it didn't conclude that eating nuts actually helped prevent men from getting prostate cancer in the first place.

However, other studies have suggested nuts – particularly walnuts – may help prevent, or at least delay, some types of cancer, including breast, prostate and colorectal.

HEARTY STUFF

Many studies have identified a link between eating nuts and reduced risk of cardiovascular problems. Harvard research found men who ate nuts at least twice a week over a year had a 47% lower risk of sudden cardiac death and a 30% lower risk of dying from all types of coronary artery disease.

It's also thought that nuts lower insulin resistance, so they help reduce the incidence of diabetes and inflammation.

fast theticket

Going for Bust

Racecourse gig – Page 23

Fright night

See Page 23

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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20 AUG • LIVERPOOL FC STADIUM TOUR & FOOTBALL MUSEUM
20 AUG • EBOR STAKES • EMMERDALE
28 AUG • NORTH SEA TALL SHIPS REGATTA
3 SEP • TOWER OF LONDON POPPIES AT LINCOLN CASTLE
3 SEP • KYNREN AT AUCKLAND CASTLE (B&B)
10 SEP • DUXFORD AIR SHOW
10 SEP • CENTRE COURT AT WIMBLEDON
10 SEP • MAN UTD THREATE OF DREAMS
17 SEP • GRASSINGTON 1940'S & CRICH
23 SEP • AFTERNOON TEA ON BELMOND BRITISH PULLMAN
24 SEP • FLYING SCOTSMAN AT SEVERN VALLEY STEAM GALA

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5 DAYS FROM £259.95
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MON 8, 22 AUG, 12 SEP, 3 OCT

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2 DAYS £119.95
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SAT 3, 24 SEP, 8 OCT, 12, 19, 26 NOV, 3, 10, 17 DEC

FOLKESTONE & CROSS CHANNEL CRUISE TO OSTEND
5 DAYS FROM £189.95
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Burstin Hotel
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MON 15, 22, 29 AUG, 5, 12, 19, 26 SEP

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EIRE- COPPER COAST 7 Aug

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5 DAYS FROM £199.95
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• Includes fantastic day trip to Guernsey
MON 1, 8, 22, 29 AUG, 12, 19 SEP, 3 OCT

BUCKINGHAM PALACE & HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
2 DAYS £119.95
OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
•Includes admission to Buckingham Palace & Houses of Parliament
SAT 6, 20 AUG, 3, 24 SEP

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4/5 DAYS FROM £199.95
3/4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD New Astoria Hotel, Ostend
• Full day excursion to Bruges & half day tour visiting Sluis in Holland
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5 DAYS MON 1, 15 AUG, 19 SEP, 24 OCT, 5 DEC

TINTAGEL PADSTOW & PORT ISAAC
5 DAYS FROM £219.95
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MON 5, 19, 26 SEP, 3, 10, 24 OCT

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Guys And Dolls

Until Saturday
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
West End star Louise Dearman (pictured) plays nightclub singer Miss Adelaide in this acclaimed revival of the classic New York musical, with Richard Fleeshman and Maxwell Caulfield.
Visit **grandtheatre.co.uk**

The Dead Daisies

Tuesday, 7pm
Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
Classic hard rock from an outfit featuring ex-Mötley Crüe singer John Corabi (pictured) and Whitesnake/Dio guitarist Doug Aldrich. Support is provided by Inglorious.
Visit **www.wolvescivic.co.uk**

The Kentucky Headhunters

Monday, 8pm
Robin 2, Bilston
Southern rock and blues from a US band with musical roots back to the late 1960s, who sold two million copies of 1989 album Pickin' On Nashville. Bad Touch support.
Visit **therobin.co.uk**

Mary Chapin Carpenter

Tuesday, 7.30pm
Town Hall, Birmingham
The five-time Grammy Award-winning American singer-songwriter returns with a new album The Things That We Are Made Of, her 14th in total. Rose Cousins support.
Visit **www.thsh.co.uk**

POP

The Searchers
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Sun at 7.30pm, £19
Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, TF9 3AX.
Call 01630 654444

Russell Watson: Songs From The Heart
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

The Bee Gees Story: Nights On Broadway
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Ray Quinn
Sun at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Andrew Browning: George Michael Tribute
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

ROCK & METAL

Catapult Club Feat. Superhooch
Tonight at 6.30pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

A Foreigners Journey: Foreigner And Journey Tribute
Tonight,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Guns 2 Roses: Guns N' Roses Tribute
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Definitely Mightbe: Oasis Tribute, Adored: Stone Roses Tribute
Tonight at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Into The Shadows: Shadows Tribute
Tonight at 7.30pm, £10 - £15
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

The Dead Daisies
Tue at 7pm, £12.50
The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

West Coast Eagles: The Eagles Tribute
Tomorrow at 7pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Area 11
Thu at 7pm, £11
The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

Brolly & Friends 2016 Irish Charity Night
Sun at 7pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band
Tue at 8.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Mary Chapin Carpenter
Tue at 7.30pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

The White Buffalo
Tonight at 7pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

JAZZ, BLUES, SOUL, FUNK AND MOTOWN

Motown's Greatest Hits: How Sweet It Is...
Sun at 7.30pm, £21 - £23
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

The Kentucky Headhunters
Mon at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Sax In The City: The Notebenders
Tomorrow at 1.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Electric Swing Circus
Thu at 7pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

CLASSICAL

CBSO Youth Orchestra Academy: Britten, Bridge, Maxwell Davies, Beethoven
Sun at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CBSO: Summer Classics
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

THEATRE

You Boy
Tonight at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Ventoux
Tonight at 8pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Bollywood Dance Showcase 2016
Sun at 6pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

The Hound Of The Baskervilles
Sun at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

The Giant's Loo Roll: TaleGate Theatre
Tue at 2pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford, TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Guys And Dolls
Tonight at 7.30pm, tomorrow at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Barbara Nice's Summer Special
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Mamma Mia!
Tonight at 7.30pm - 10pm, tomorrow at 2.30pm - 5.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm - 10pm, Tue at 7.30pm - 10pm, Wed at 2.30pm - 5.30pm, 7.30pm - 10pm, Thu at 7.30pm - 10pm, £28 - £60
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

National Youth Dance Company: In-Nocentes
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

COMEDY

EdinBrum Previews: Patrick Monahan & Eddy Brimson
Thu at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Thursday Night Comedy Carousel
Thu at 8pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

The Best In Live Stand-up Comedy
Tonight at 8.15pm, tomorrow at 8.15pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Comedy In The Met
Tomorrow at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

MISC. EVENTS

Summer Holiday Family Fun
Tomorrow - Thu,
Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham, B30 2LU.
Call 0844 880 7667

REP Event Showcase
Sun at 11am - 4pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Approaches To Aspects Of Drawing
Tomorrow at 11am - 4pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Young Artists
Tomorrow at 1pm - 3pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

SLAM Wrestling
Wed at 7.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Kings Heath Food Assembly
Tue at 7.30pm - 9pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

GALLERIES & EXHIBITIONS

Mabel's Vintage Fair
Sun at 11am - 4pm,
Chasewater Railway, Chasetown, Burntwood, WS8 7NL.
Call 01543 682854

Antiques For Everyone Summer Fair
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm,
The NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Land, Sea And Air
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG.
Call 01922 654400

Kan Xuan
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

Jesse Bruton
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

All The World's A Stage
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Inspire 16: The Young Creatives Of Birmingham
Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH.
Call 0121 303 1966

A Big Bang: The Origins Of The Pop Art Collection Part 2
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

Tales Of The City
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Two Tyres
Tomorrow at 11am - 4pm,
Bilston Craft Gallery, WV14 7LU.
Call 01902 552507

Craft Goes Pop
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

The Lanchester Grand Circus
Tomorrow at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
Bantock House, Wolverhampton, WV3 9LQ.
Call 01902 552195

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Reunited Busted back in the race

NOUGHTIES pop favourites Busted are mended... the return of frontman Charlie Simpson after a decade away means that the original trio will be back for a huge end of summer gig at Wolverhampton Racecourse on September 3.

Music Live! presents an afternoon and evening of horse racing and pop music for £38 a ticket (£18 under-18s) and family packages are available. Gates open at 3.20pm and there will be seven races on the all-weather track, starting at 5.50pm, followed by music after the last race.

Singer Charlie Simpson has rejoined former bandmates James Bourne and Matt Willis, after they formed a partnership with McFly in supergroup McBusted for hugely successful arena tours.

Busted themselves had four no1 singles, two albums and sold five million records before enjoying a record-breaking run of 12 sold-out shows at Wembley.

The Essex trio's hits included What I Go To School For, Year 3000, You Said No, Air Hostess, Crashed The Wedding, Who's David and Thunderbirds/3AM.

Charlie said: "A year ago James and I got together and just started hanging out. It really had been 10 years since we hung out. There was this huge void of time where we just didn't speak. Not because he had any issues but I was off doing my own thing, and he was busy, so we just drifted apart.

"And we just started… getting on. It felt really different, somehow, to how it had ten years ago. And the idea crept into my head: what would Busted look like today?"

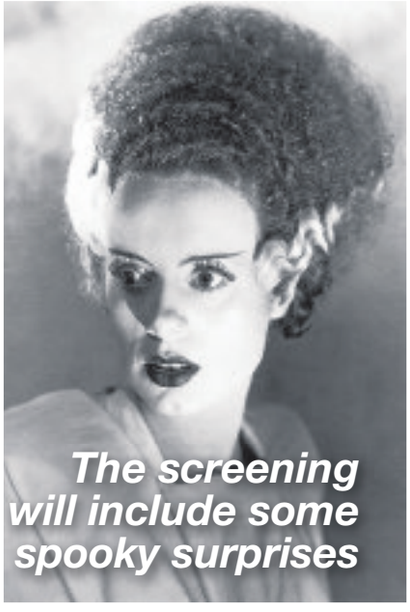
Busted mended – James Bourne, Matt Willis and Charlie Simpson

James, guitarist and the main songwriter, admits he was pessimistic about the return of the band he had co-founded in Southend-on-Sea in 2000, adding: "I thought it was dead and buried when the band had been gone for five years.

"For me, there's a huge sense of unfinished business," says bassist Matt. "I think I always thought in my heart we'd do Busted again."

The Wolverhampton gig extends the band's comeback Pigs Can Fly tour.

See www.wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk for details.



Movie night at the castle

DUDLEY Castle will be the atmospheric backdrop for an outdoor screening of a classic black and white horror movie this summer.

The Bride of Frankenstein, directed by Dudley-born Hollywood movie maker James Whale, will be screened on Saturday, August 6, at an event entitled Dudley Castle After Dark, as part of Birmingham-based Flatpack Film Festival's Black Country Pop-up Film Tour.

The 1935 movie stars Boris Karloff as the Monster and Elsa Lanchester in the dual role of Frankenstein author Mary Shelley and the Monster's mate.

The special screening will include some spooky surprises and the audience are invited to bring their own blanket or chair when the Black Country landmark is transformed into an open-air cinema.

Tickets cost £10 (£8 concessions) for the 8pm screening. The film is a PG and runs for 75 minutes.Tickets available from flatpackfestival.org.uk/event/bride-of-frankenstein website.

Mr Whale, who died in 1957 aged 67, came from humble beginnings in Park Hill Street, Buffery Park, to become one of cinema's most influential directors. His work included such classics as Frankenstein and the Invisible Man in the 1930s. One of six children born to a blast furnaceman and a nurse, he attended Kate's Hill Board School, Bayliss Charity School and Dudley Blue Coat School. He began his career as an artist and actor before directing, first in the theatre and then for the silver screen.

Psychedelic rock and boyband pop

PSYCHEDELIC outfit Moon Duo from America's West Coast bring their hazy fuzz rock to Kings Heath pub venue The Hare & Hounds on Friday with support from Birmingham's Victories At Sea. The venue's other room that night hosts Canadian art rockers Weaves with Brum garage rockers Table Scraps. On Saturday Ireland's hottest boy band Taken play the High Street venue, then US soul songstress Conya Doss plays on Wednesday.

On Friday Calfornia's White Buffalo (AKA Jake Smith) is at Digbeth's O2 Institute. Scottish outfit The Lafontaines bring hip hop rock to The Rainbow in Digbeth on Sunday.

Super-sized panto with hint of Spice

THE World's Biggest Pantomime is set to dazzle this Christmas in Birmingham – and it's a real family affair for its biggest star.

Traditional panto Snow White will be 'super-sized' at the Barclaycard Arena with a cast of 100 performers and a 45ft-tall castle. The cast include former Spice Girl Mel B as the Scary Queen with her daughters Angel Murphy, nine, and Madison Belafonte, five, taking part.

The show, December 19-22, also features Take Me Out's Paddy McGuinness, Celebrity Big Brother winner Rylan and star dancers Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace.

Oh Mamma Mia! show is a big hit

SUNSHINE musical Mamma Mia! continues to pull in the crowds at Birmingham Hippodrome, where it runs until September 3. The combination of a Greek island setting, humour and romance with the music of ABBA has proven the perfect recipe for a blockbuster.

That's Entertainment, a show celebrating musical theatre, is at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday with West End star Ruthie Henshall. On Sunday Motown tribute show How Sweet It Is visits the Alex for one night. Cult musical Rent is staged at The Old Rep on Station Street from Tuesday to Saturday, July 30

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 21, 2016

CHOICE

Quentin Blake

The Marvellous World of Roald Dahl (BBC2, 8pm)

Documentary, making use of archived letters, writings and biographical material to tell the story of the life of Roald Dahl. From his time as a fighter pilot in the Second World War, though to his work as a spy and his encounters with Walt Disney and Theodore Roosevelt, the programme explores how Dahl's personal experiences may have informed the fantastical tales he would eventually publish, including Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Matilda. Includes contributions by Dahl's last wife Liccy, his daughter Lucy and biographer Donald Sturrock. Long-term collaborator Quentin Blake also provides new animated illustrations based on the events of Dahl's life.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **12.45** Faster, Higher, Stronger: Katarina's Olympic Dream. A profile of Team GB heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson. **1.15** Athletics: London Anniversary Games. Day one from the Olympic Stadium. **5.15 Film:** Toy Story. (1995) Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.

6.30 BBC News.

6.40 Regional Programme.

6.50 The Getaway Car. Competitors from London, south Wales and Liverpool are among those taking to the course in South Africa to put their collaborative driving skills to the test.

7.40 The National Lottery: Five Star Family Reunion. A UK family and their long-lost overseas relatives must work together and answer questions to win a reunion in a five-star location. Includes the weekend draw. Last in the series.

8.30 The Musketeers. Aramis and the Queen attempt to broker peace between France and Spain, but their efforts go disastrously awry when the villainous Grimaud kidnaps Aramis in a bid to seal an alliance with the influential Duke of Lorraine. Lucien's demands threaten to ruin Anne's reputation, and the Musketeers must find a way to rescue their comrade in arms while maintaining the Queen's virtue. However, D'Artagnan's family ties threaten to derail the mission. Meanwhile, the White Plague tightens its grip on King Louis, and as his health goes into a spectacular decline, a familiar face returns to lay claim to Athos. Swashbuckling drama, starring Santiago Cabrera, Matthew McNulty, Alexandra Dowling and Tom Burke.

9.25 BBC News; Weather.

9.45 Mrs Brown's Boys Live. The comedy starring Brendan O'Carroll goes live for a special episode where anything could happen.

10.15 Peter Kay: 20 Years of Funny. A celebration of the comedian's two decades in the business; (R) National Lottery Update.

11.15 Film: The Wedding Video. (2012) Comedy, with Rufus Hound.

12.45 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.50 BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 The Women's Football Show. (R) **6.55** Coast. (R) **7.45 Film:** The Valley of Gwangi. (1969) **9.20** Taking Flight: Britain's America's Cup Challenge. **10.10** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.10** Natural World. (R) **12.00** The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure. (R) **1.00 Film:** Day of the Evil Gun. (1968) Western, starring Glenn Ford. **2.30** Escape to the Continent. (R) **3.30** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Full Steam Ahead. (R) **5.30** Gardeners' World. (R)

6.00 Newsnight Special: Life After Brexit.

6.50 Proms Extra 2016. New series. Katie Derham returns with the weekly magazine show, which serves as a companion to the BBC's signature classical music season. With music by Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

7.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring and his platoon are ordered to clear the area for a major army exercise – but encounter a problem in the shape of a steam engine blocking the path. (R)

8.00 The Marvellous World of Roald Dahl. Documentary telling the story of the life of Roald Dahl, with contributions by Dahl's wife Liccy, his daughter Lucy, biographer Donald Sturrock and illustrator Quentin Blake.

9.00 Keith Richards: The Origin of the Species. In a documentary directed by acclaimed film-maker Julien Temple, the Rolling Stones guitarist looks back at his formative years in the aftermath of the Second World War.

10.00 QI XL. Extended edition. Josh Widdicombe, Aisling Bea, Tony Hawks and Alan Davies attempt to answer Stephen Fry's range of fiendish questions on the topics of love and loveliness. (R)

10.45 Versailles. With Louis laid low by a major fever, those conspiring against him grow in strength and confidence. Meanwhile, Philippe is caught in the middle; (R) Inside Versailles.

11.45 Film: I Am Number Four. (2011) A teenager with special powers becomes a fugitive from aliens determined to hunt him down and destroy him. Sci-fi thriller, starring Alex Pettyfer and Timothy Olyphant.

1.25 Film: Far from Home. (1989) Thriller, starring Drew Barrymore. **2.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** Ninjago: Rise of the Snakes. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** The Wine Show. **1.30** Big Box Little Box. (R) **2.00** Doc Martin. (R) **3.00** The Chase. (R) **4.00** Midsomer Murders. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 You've Been Framed! Gold. Harry Hill narrates another selection of comical mishaps filmed by viewers. This week, a mechanic uses an airbag as a launch-pad. A moped selfie causes a nasty accident that results in a string of profanities, and a peck from a tropical bird make's Grandad's eyes water. Plus, a video detailing the dangers of wearing a monkey as a wig. (R)

7.00 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000.

7.45 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man. (2012) A gifted teenager investigates the secrets hidden in his dead parents's past, leading him to a mysterious corporation and an incident that imbues him with superhuman powers. A personal tragedy drives him to use his new-found abilities to fight crime, and he is soon drawn into a deadly battle against a former colleague of his father, who has undergone a devastating transformation of his own. Superhero adventure reboot, starring Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone and Rhys Ifans.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Film: Inside Man. (2006) A negotiator deals with a hostage crisis at a bank, but a political fixer is sent to make sure secrets in the vault stay hidden. Thriller, starring Denzel Washington.

12.50 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 The Grid. **6.30** Gillette World Sport. **7.00** Tenerife Bluetrail. **7.25** British Rally Championship. **7.50** Dare to Believe: Georgie Hermitage. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** The Morning Line. **9.55** Formula 1: Hungarian Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. Coverage from the Hungaroring. **11.25** The Superhumans Show. **11.55** Formula 1: Hungarian Grand Prix Qualifying Live. Coverage from the Hungaroring (Start-time 1.00pm). **2.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot and York. **4.45** A Place in the Sun. **5.30** Channel 4 News. **5.55 Film:** Grease. (1978) Romantic musical, with John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John.

8.00 Alan Carr's Grease Night. Broadcasting live from a 1950s-style high school prom, the presenter is joined by celebrity guests including comedian Katherine Ryan and Didi Conn (Frenchy) to celebrate the film. The programme features dancing, dating and audience surprises, and at the end of the night two lucky revellers will win the ultimate high-school accolade of being crowned prom king and queen.

10.00 Film: The Inbetweeners Movie. (2011) Awkward teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday – but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison.

11.50 Dare to Believe: Jack Rutter. A profile of the captain of Great Britain's disability football team, who will attempt to lead his team to glory at Rio 2016. (R)

11.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Part two of two. The chef continues his quest to transform the fortunes of the Burger Kitchen in Los Angeles, where owner Alan gets a wake-up call from internet critics. (R)

12.55 Film: Rec 3: Genesis. (2012) Horror sequel, starring Leticia Dolera. **2.20** Dare to Believe: Ali Jawad. A profile of powerlifter Ali Jawad. (R) **2.25** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Lisa decides to set up Zack and Holly, and later she and Sonia fight on The Dog patio. Meanwhile, Cleo and Nathan grow closer, and Kim collapses. (R) **4.25** French Collection. Three Brits aim to buy cheap and sell high after visiting a market in Arles, France. Last in the series. (R) **5.20** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. A couple's bedroom receives a makeover. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.25** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.00** The Saturday Show Live. **11.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Benefits: Can't Work, Won't Work. (R) **1.00** Benefits: 26 Kids & Claiming. (R) **2.00** Benefits: Yorkshire Dole. (R) **3.00** Benefit Beauty Queens. (R) **4.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R) **5.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R)

6.00 World's Strongest Man 2015. Action from the third heat of the competition, which took place in Malaysia. Reigning champion Zydrunas Savickas took part alongside two-time Britain's Strongest Man Laurence Shahlaei, veteran American Nick Best and former Russian marine Mikhail Shivlyakov. Presented by James Richardson, Charlie Webster and Terry Hollands, with commentary by Colin Bryce and Danny Wallace. (R)

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from day two of the Second Test in the four-match series, which took place at Old Trafford. With commentary by Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes.

8.00 NCIS. An NCIS Cyber case becomes a united global effort when evidence confirms that The Calling, an international terror group, has been recruiting vulnerable youngsters via the internet.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Big Brother. Highlights of another 24 hours in the Big Brother house, including another chance to see last night's eviction, revealing who became the latest unlucky housemate given just 30 seconds to say their goodbyes, and how their departure has affected the others. However, given that the remaining residents will probably all be in Tuesday night's final, it's doubtful that any of them will be too upset.

10.00 Film: The Expendables. (2010) A mercenary team is double-crossed while on a mission to kill a South American dictator. Action thriller, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone. With Jason Statham and Jet Li. Includes 5 News at 11pm.

12.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** Big Brother. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 The Search for the Lost Manuscript: Julian of Norwich **8.00** Who Were the Greeks? **9.00** Beck: The Weak Link **10.30** Sinatra: All or Nothing at All **12.35** Gershwin's Summertime: The Song That Conquered the World **1.35** Sings James Bond **2.35** Top of the Pops: 1982 **3.15** Close

ITV2

12.35 Catchphrase Celebrity Special **1.35** Ninja Warrior UK **2.35 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **3.35** FYI Daily **3.40 Film:** The Flintstones (1994) **4.20 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **5.20** FYI Daily **5.25 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **6.15 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **8.00 Film:** Burlesque (2010) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** Burlesque (2010) **10.25** Family Guy **11.55** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Planet's Funniest Animals **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

12.10 Agatha Christie's Marple **2.10 Film:** The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15 Film:** The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **4.00 Film:** Agatha (1979) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** Agatha (1979) **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Lewis **10.00** A Touch of Frost **12.10** The Jury **1.10** City Lights **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

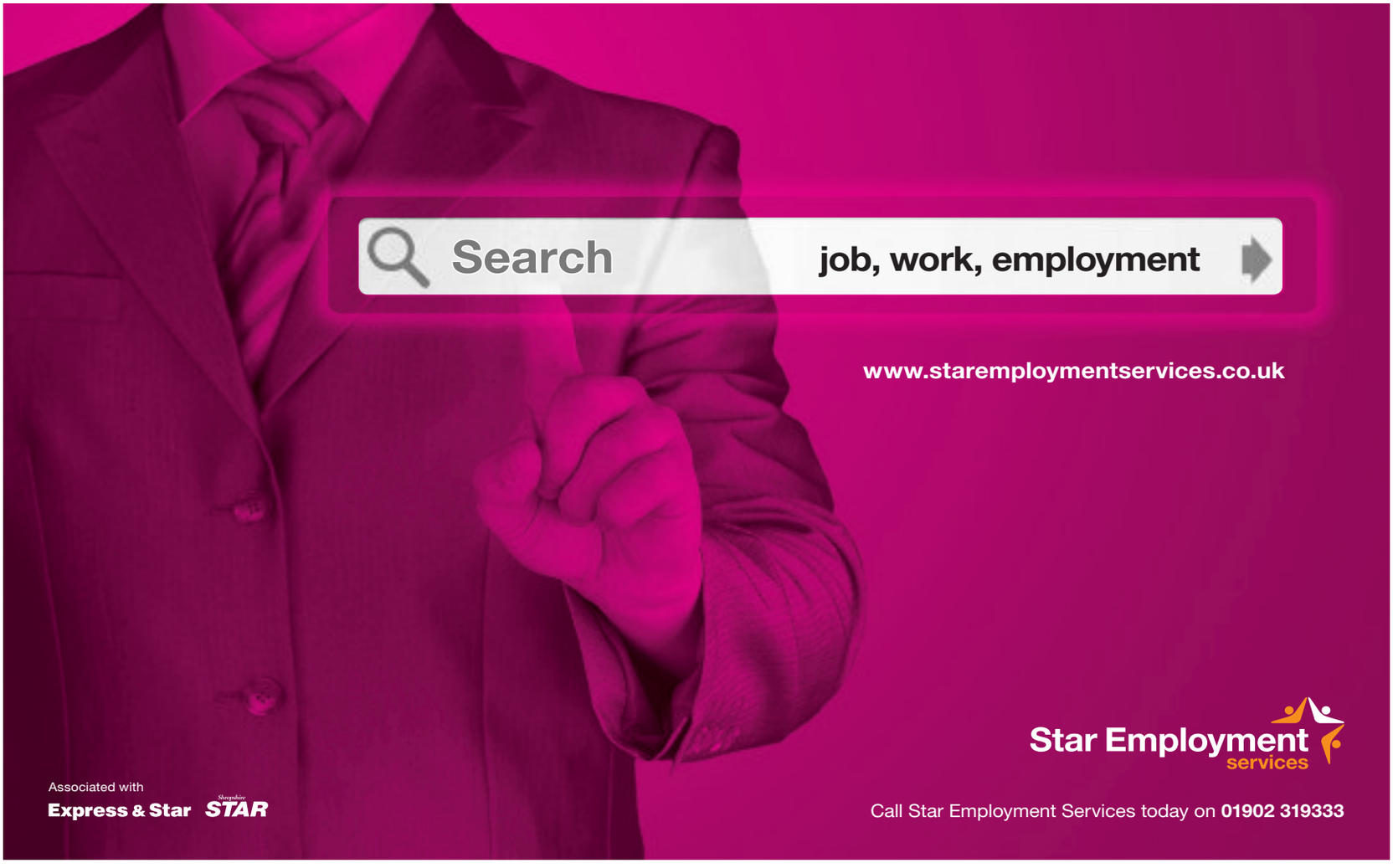
11.00 Tour de France Highlights **12.00** Tour de France Live. **4.30** Storage Wars: New York **4.55** Monster Carp **6.00** The Motorbike Show **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00 Film:** A View to a Kill (1985) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10 Film:** A View to a Kill (1985) **10.40 Film:** Game of Death (2010) **11.40** FYI Daily **11.45 Film:** Game of Death (2010) **12.45** Motorway Patrol **1.10** Tour de France Highlights **2.05** The Wine Show **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 Melissa & Joey **1.30** Baby Daddy **2.30** New Girl **3.00** The Goldbergs **5.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Bad Teacher (2011) **10.50** Gogglebox **12.55** Rude Tube **2.55** 2 Broke Girls **3.40** How I Met Your Mother **4.20** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4

11.00 Picture Perfect (1997) **1.00** Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **2.55** Fast Girls (2012) **4.40** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **6.45** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** RoboCop (2014) **11.15** The Treatment (2014) **1.50** 21 & Over (2013) **3.45** Close



CHOICE

Dara O Briain

Robot Wars (BBC2, 8pm)

New series. Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon host the revival of the series in which radio-controlled robots created by teams of amateur engineers battle it out in an arena. The machines have to make it through an initial group stage, then head-to-head rounds before the heat final. The first show features students from Reading and a family team from Caithness, as well as a memorable robot from the original series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Animal Super Parents. (R) **4.00** Eat Well for Less? (R) **5.00** Lifeline. **5.10** Songs of Praise. **5.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R)

6.30 BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile. An episode from Cumbria marking Beatrix Potter's 150th birthday, in which Matt Baker visits the places that inspired her work and Naomi Wilkinson meets an artist who depicts inspirational women of the region. Helen Skelton visits a farm run using traditional methods and finds out about Lakeland wrestling, Adam Henson reports on the restoration of a landscape designed by Capability Brown, and Tom Heap investigates calls to ban the world's most common herbicide.

8.00 Fake or Fortune? Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould visit a B&B in Aberdeenshire to pick up where the owner's late husband left off in proving that a painting is the work of 19th-century French artist Paul Delaroche. A visit to the British museum raises evidence that this could be a lost treasure once belonging to France's last king and queen, and they head for Normandy to inspect a stained glass window in the image of a lost Delaroche painting – but they also begin to suspect it is a copy, rather than the original.

9.00 The Secret Agent. Verloc leaves the city for Michaelis' Kent cottage to prepare his bombing plot, taking Stevie with him. Back in London, the Professor prepares to take action against Inspector Heat.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Live at the Apollo. Sarah Millican introduces routines by comedians Steve Hughes and Russell Kane. (R)

11.15 Film: Dinner for Schmucks. (2010) An executive befriends a dim-witted amateur taxidermist in the hope of winning a contest to find the most ridiculous dinner-party guest. Comedy, with Steve Carell and Paul Rudd.

1.00 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** Great British Garden Revival. (R) **8.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **11.00** A Cook Abroad: Rachel Khoo's Malaysia. (R) **12.00** Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook. (R) **12.30** Inspire: The Olympic Journey. With Helen Glover and Heather Stanning. **1.00** Hitchcock's Leading Actors: Talking Pictures. (R) **1.30 Film:** Rear Window. (1954) Hitchcock thriller, starring James Stewart. **3.20** David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** New Zealand: Earth's Mythical Islands. (R) **5.30** Clare Balding Meets.

6.00 Film: Real Steel. (2011) In the future, boxing matches between eight-foot robots are one of the world's biggest sporting draws. A washed-up human prizefighter finds an abandoned android and sets about restoring it to become a potential champion, a project that reunites him with his estranged 11-year-old son. Sci-fi drama, starring Hugh Jackman, Dakota Goyo and Evangeline Lilly. Edited for daytime broadcast.

8.00 Robot Wars. New series. Radio-controlled robots battle it out in an arena.

9.00 Dragons' Den. New series. Evan Davis presents the business ideas contest, with regular panellists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Sarah Willingham, Touker Suleyman and Nick Jenkins returning to assess the profit-making potential of the contestants' grand plans. Among the entrepreneurial endeavours in this episode are ideas for miniature pencils, oversized beanbags and a machine for cleaning football boots. However, one contestant finds their hopes may be dashed by the revelation that their company is already heavily in debt.

10.00 Fixing Dad. Two brothers document their efforts to ensure their father adopts a healthier lifestyle, as he struggles with various conditions linked to diabetes that threaten his life.

11.00 Horizon: Sports Doping – Winning at Any Cost? Dr Xand van Tulleken investigates the world of performance enhancing drugs. (R)

12.00 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **12.55** Holby City. (R) **1.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories; Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Oddbods. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Rebound. (R) **1.25** Long Lost Family. (R) **2.30** Love Your Garden. (R) **3.30** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.30** Masterpiece with Alan Titchmarsh. (R)

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Astrologer Russell Grant, Atomic Kitten singer Liz McClarnon, Loose Women's Sherrie Hewson and entertainer Des O'Connor compete to win thousands of pounds for charity by pitting their general knowledge against one of the show's resident trivia experts. However, they must work as a team to build their prize pot and stay one step ahead of the Chaser. Bradley Walsh hosts. (R)

8.00 Film: Quantum of Solace. (2008) James Bond sets out on a personal mission of vengeance as he pursues the secret criminal organisation Quantum. His search leads him to the head of an ecological corporation, who is plotting to orchestrate a coup in a Latin American country to get his hands on a precious natural resource. Spy thriller sequel, starring Daniel Craig, Olga Kurylenko, Judi Dench, Gemma Arterton and Mathieu Amalric.

10.05 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Film: I Am Legend. (2007) A Manhattan-based scientist tries to find a cure for a viral plague that has turned all other humans into vampire-like creatures. Sci-fi thriller, with Will Smith and Alice Braga.

12.05 River Monsters. Part two of two. Jeremy Wade heads to Norway. (R) **12.30** Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.00** Motorsport UK. Highlights from Oulton Park. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. The host invites guests to air their differences. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Shipping Wars. (R) **6.40** Shipping Wars. (R) **7.00** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** The King of Queens. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Dare to Believe: Natasha Baker. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1: Hungarian Grand Prix Live. Coverage from the Hungaroring (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.30** Anniversary Games Athletics 2016. **4.00** Dare to Believe: Jordanne Whiley. (R) **4.05** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. **5.05 Film:** Toy Story That Time Forgot. (2014) Premiere. Short animated comedy, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. **5.30 Film:** Finding Nemo. (2003) Animated adventure, with the voices of Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres.

7.30 Channel 4 News.

8.00 Saddam Goes to Hollywood. Documentary telling the story of a disastrous movie bankrolled by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s, which was to tell the story of the founding of Iraq. War with Iran disrupted filming, while the movie's star, Oliver Reed, horrified the locals with his heavy drinking. Although the film was completed, the tapes were subsequently lost – only to be recovered years later. Cast and crew are reunited to watch never-before-seen rushes and behind the scenes footage.

9.00 Film: The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. (2013) Premiere. An ordinary man seeks solace from his mundane life by drifting into daydreams where he is a heroic figure. When he and a friend are faced with unemployment, he is propelled into a globetrotting adventure in real life. Comedy drama based on James Thurber's short story, directed by and starring Ben Stiller.

11.05 Friday Night Dinner. Dad accidentally invites someone he hates to come round for dinner, and has to find a way to get rid of him. Fourth series of the sitcom, starring Paul Ritter. (R)

11.40 Dare to Believe: Hannah Cockroft. A profile of the British wheelchair athlete, who holds the Paralympic and world records for both the 100m T34 and 200m T34 events. (R)

11.45 Formula 1 2016 Hungarian Grand Prix Highlights.

12.45 Film: Escape from Alcatraz. (1979) **2.40** Born on the Same Day. (R) **3.35** Superfoods: The Real Story. (R) **4.00** Posh Pawn. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina: The Next Steps. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Pets. (R) **7.10** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Shimmer and Shine. **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Access. (R) **10.40** Now That's Funny! (R) **11.40** Now That's Funny! (R) **12.40 Film:** RV: Runaway Vacation. (2006) **2.30 Film:** Dennis the Menace Strikes Again. (1998) **4.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R) **5.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R)

6.00 World's Strongest Man Final 2015. Action from the Grand Final of the competition, which took place in Malaysia, as the 10 competitors who made it past the heats went head to head for the trophy. Last in the series. (R)

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from day three of the Second Test in the four-match series, which took place at Old Trafford.

8.00 Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. Compilation of internet videos featuring dogs doing bizarre and humorous things. Narrated by Iain Lee, with contributors Dave Spikey, Matt Richardson and Zoe Lyons.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Big Brother. Daily round-up of highlights as the remaining housemates start their final week under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother.

10.00 Lip Sync Battle US: Star Trek Special. LL Cool J and Chrissy Teigen invite Star Trek Beyond stars Zoe Saldana and Zachary Quinto to take part in a mime-off – with help from Cindy Crawford and T-Boz and Chilli of TLC. (R)

11.00 20 Moments That Shocked Pop. Countdown of significant performers, songs or occasions that impacted the genre, including 1985's global Live Aid event, which redefined how society donated to charity. (R)

12.30 Lip Sync Battle. (R) **12.55** SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.50** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms 2016: A Child of Our Time **8.15** Playing Beethoven's Fifth **9.00** Classic Albums: The Beach Boys – Pet Sounds **10.00** Arena: 1966 – 50 Years Ago Today **11.00** Definitely Dusty **12.00** The Secret Life of Waves **1.00** Yellowstone **2.00** Classic Albums: The Beach Boys – Pet Sounds **3.00** Arena: 1966 – 50 Years Ago Today **4.00** Close

ITV2

12.50 Take Me Out **1.50** Catchphrase **2.30 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **3.30** FYI Daily **3.35 Film:** Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure (1989) **4.20 Film:** King Kong (2005) **5.20** FYI Daily **5.25 Film:** King Kong (2005) **7.55 Film:** The Wedding Planner (2001) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00 Film:** The Wedding Planner (2001) **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** Bordertown **12.00** American Dad! **1.00** The Cleveland Show **2.00** Planet's Funniest Animals **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.55 A Touch of Frost **2.10 Film:** Agatha (1979) **3.15** FYI Daily **3.20 Film:** Agatha (1979) **4.10 Film:** Blue Murder at St Trinian's (1957) **6.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** The Booze Cruise **10.10 Film:** Steptoe and Son (1972) **11.10** FYI Daily **11.15 Film:** Steptoe and Son (1972) **12.15** Wire in the Blood **3.00** May the Best House Win **4.45** On the Buses **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

11.00 The Motorbike Show **12.00** Tour de France Highlights **1.00** Tour de France Live. The final stage of this year's race. **7.00** The Wine Show **8.00** Storage Wars **9.00** Tour de France Highlights **10.00 Film:** Unforgiven (1992) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10 Film:** Unforgiven (1992) **12.40** Motorway Patrol **1.10** Tour de France Highlights **2.10** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.30 The Goldbergs **2.30 Film:** Gulliver's Travels (2010) **4.10** Rude(ish) Tube **4.35** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.05** Rich Kids of Instagram **1.10** Containment **2.10** Gogglebox **3.05** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4

11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) **1.00** Honey, I Shrunk the Kids (1989) **2.50** Dunston Checks In (1996) **4.35** Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian (2009) **6.45** Ender's Game (2013) **9.00** Die Hard (1988) **11.40** The Others (2001) **1.45** Cedar Rapids (2011) **3.35** Close

ADVERTISEMENT

Former midwife's smile reborn

'I'd grown tired of living my life around my teeth'

Former Dudley community midwife Vicki Ball, left, is full of smiles after getting new teeth and an implant solution to a long-standing stabilisation problem. 'I love my new teeth,' she says

MEETING Vicki Ball is all about the smiles – lots of them. She's generous with her compliments, can't wait for her next holiday adventure and has the most infectious of laughs.

Her company is light and she's gushing with the praise about her new look.

A retired community midwife who was based at the former Wordsley Hospital, the bubbly 60-something-year-old is quick to affirm: "I love my new teeth and they look natural, don't they?"

Adding: "You can't tell they're not my own," Vicki admits her smile has not always been her favourite attribute. "I've always had trouble with my teeth; even as a young girl they crumbled and my gums used to bleed. Even though I was diligent about looking after them, they still let me down," she adds.

Two years ago, Vicki finally lost her remaining teeth. "I really don't know why my teeth were so bad, but I was the youngest of eight children and I understand my mother's priorities did not include teaching me how to brush my teeth. She had more pressing priorities of how she was going to put food on the table," Vicki recalls.

A teenager by the time she had her first tooth brush, she is convinced she couldn't have done more to save her own teeth.

"For the last 18 months I've put up with ill-fitting and badly made dentures. My gums were always sore and the bottom denture was unstable.

Researching options

"My top teeth I could secure with a fixative, but for the bottom it was a waste of time – as soon as I had anything to eat the stability was over," says Vicki.

Her diet became restricted, avoiding beef and crispy fruits like apples.

Frustrated by the appearance and function of her teeth – they seemed to be set too far back, Vicky says – she started researching her options.

"I'd grown tired of living my whole life around my teeth. I never really stopped going out, but when I did, I was always thinking ahead where I could go to take my teeth out. They were just so uncomfortable." A self-confessed lover of travel overseas – "it's my hobby" – Vicki saw an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) and his work at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

North Street's dental implant surgeon, Dr Owain Rees (left) BDS, DGDP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576 with principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353

"I'd seen a piece about suction dentures and implant retained dentures and there seemed to be a solution for me," she says.

After seeing Steven and implant surgeon Dr Owain Rees BDS, DGDP (UK) DIP IMP DENT (UCL), Vicki's treatment included two implants to stabilise a lower over denture and the prescribing of high quality traditional upper dentures to help support her facial features. "From start to finish it took 14 weeks, but it was worth the wait. When I first saw my teeth in the mirror, I thought they looked just like real teeth and . . . they feel like my own teeth.

Such a relief

"My husband, Terry, couldn't believe they were so good. Not to have to keep thinking about my teeth when I'm out is such a relief," she says.

Steven says: "Mrs Ball needed dentures that would offer proper support to her facial features.

"These days the term 'facelift' dentures is banded about. The claim is spurious, but with the correct setting of teeth, the effect is to lift the facial structures in the same way natural healthy gums and teeth support tissues and muscles. I'm very please to have been be part of giving a new birth the Vicki's smile."

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Denture Clinic

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Perfect Seduction, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Despite having left his girlfriend behind in New York City for a promotion in Portland, Brandon hopes that they can make things work long-distance. But his new co-worker Simone has other ideas and she impersonates both Brandon and his absent girlfriend in order to end their relationship. Thriller, starring Adrienne Frantz, Jon Cor and Ashley Leggat. (2015)

TUESDAY
A Bone to Pick: An Aurora Teagarden Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Librarian sleuth Aurora Teagarden inherits a house when her friend unexpectedly dies and discovers her new home has a skull hidden in a window seat. She sets out to discover who the victim was, but finds herself thrown into a troubling murder mystery and a street full of suspicious neighbours. Mystery, starring Candace Cameron Bure, Peter Benson and Dave Collette. (2015)

The Nutty Professor, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY
The Reader, Channel 4, 1.35am
A teenager embarks on a brief but passionate affair with an older woman, who seeks solace from her misery in the stories he reads to her. Years later, while observing the Nazi war crimes trials, he encounters her again and learns she acted as an SS concentration camp guard during the Second World War. Drama, starring an Oscar-winning Kate Winslet alongside Ralph Fiennes, Jeanette Hain and David Kross. (2008)

FRIDAY
The Nutty Professor, ITV, 10.40pm
An obese, terminally shy professor invents a potion that transforms him into a slim, loud-mouthed charmer. His new streamlined self immediately sets out to woo the woman of his dreams – but soon starts to ride roughshod over everything he used to care about. Remake of the 1963 Jerry Lewis comedy, starring Eddie Murphy, James Coburn, Larry Miller, Jada Pinkett Smith, Dave Chappelle, John Ales, Patricia Wilson and Jamal Mixon. (1996)

Dawn has to rethink her whole future

Who was it that claimed there are no good roles for women over a certain age, and that females are under-represented in TV drama?

Clearly they haven't been watching British telly recently, where the likes of Happy Valley, Vera, Marcella and From Darkness, to name but a few, have garnered acclaim and great ratings in equal measure.

Brief Encounters, which started four weeks ago, can now be added to that impressive list.

Set in the drab surroundings of the unemployment-hit Sheffield of 1982, it charts the lives of a group of women as they attempt to spice up their existences and earn extra, much-needed money by hosting parties selling exotic lingerie and what are euphemistically described as 'marital aids'.

One of the few members of the cast who remember the period in which the series is set is Penelope Wilton who, in 1982, was appearing in Major Barbara at London's National Theatre.

"Major Barbara was directed by Peter Gill and was a wonderful play by Shaw," says Wilton when asked for her memories of that era. "I was at the National for a long time.

"We didn't have social media but there were a lot of other things going on. No one was innocent after the war. I think it was a more informed time. I'm not entirely sure that more availability has made anyone any more informed – in fact, quite the contrary."

The Downton Abbey veteran plays Pauline, a housewife who loves her social-climbing husband Brian but is unfulfilled by her meek and mild role in life.

"She has been the stay-at-home wife without seemingly much going on in her life," explains Wilton. "She's quite a solitary person who seems to have a sadness about her. She meets other friends; they have coffee and attend the odd Rotary Club dinner or play Bridge. She feels there is nothing remarkable about her as a person. She has simply fitted in.

"Pauline lives this solitary life, but she comes to realise with the friends she has made through the parties that she has a support, which she is very grateful for."

Pauline would have loved to have been a mother, and her relationship with Dawn gives her an opportunity to create a sort of surrogate family, which is one of the delights of the programme.

"Her relationship with Dawn, who she meets in the hairdresser's, becomes very important," reveals the actress. "Dawn needs a temporary home so Pauline takes her in and finds she really enjoys having these younger people in the house.

"It doesn't go down very well with her husband Brian who is used to having things in order and an ordered lifestyle. Then this new situation disrupts his world. But, of course, it gives Pauline a role to play and she finds that very invigorating and satisfying."

In this week's episode, she will no doubt have to offer Dawn a shoulder to cry on and a few well-chosen comforting words as her lodger learns that Russell is beginning to get cold feet about their wedding.

Sophie Rundle stars in Brief Encounters, Monday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

Monday
Eden
Channel 4, 9pm
You may know the format by now: 23 men and women attempt to start a new society from scratch in the wilds of the Highlands. This second instalment follows the group as they attempt to organise their new world. Having moved into the camp, the participants must now get used to living with each other, which is easier for some than it is for others. With winter coming, Anton is spending more time building his cabin in the woods.

TUESDAY
The Living and the Dead
BBC1, 9pm
An engineer is spooked by a gruesome apparition on All Hallows Eve, and when he and his colleagues flee the scene, the railway company suspends all work. The village's residents pass the incident off as excessive nervousness on the part of city-folk unaccustomed to rural life, but when the hauntings start to take a lethal bent, even they concede there is 'something wrong' with their home. Blame turns to the Appleby's, whose return co-incided with the supernatural influx, and an increasingly unhinged Nathan earns the ire of not only his own wife, but also Harriet's father.

WEDNESDAY
The Three Day Nanny
Channel 4, 8pm
Kathryn Mewes is back, and in the first of a new series she heads for Northamptonshire where the Scott family are at their wits' end. Two-year-old Freddie and three-year-old Bobbie pinch, punch, kick or bite anyone they meet, and parents Chris and Becky are desperate to stop them. It's obvious that things are going to have to change for the sake of their family, and their loved ones as this is some of the most extreme behaviour Kathryn has seen. She needs to give the couple a wake-up call, and as the first of her three days helping the family begins, she wastes little time teaching a new approach to managing their boys' attitudes.

Long Lost Family
ITV, 9pm
Fifty-year-old Deborah Ozturk has spent years longing to find her birth mother and thank her for the sacrifice she made when she gave her up as a baby. Meanwhile, 74-year-old Ray Jones from West Sussex realised as an adult that there was a void in his life, after he was separated from his mother and younger brother at the age of two. However, during his search for his family the previous year, he accessed his case file and is now haunted by a missed opportunity. Presented by Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell.

THURSDAY
Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch
Channel 5, 9pm
Just when you thought it was safe to turn Channel 5 back on, here comes yet another take on the BB format – this time featuring celebrities. Or does it? In recent years, viewers have been left scratching their heads by the identities of some of the 'famous faces' who've moved in. Hopefully, this time the majority of them will at least be familiar to the general public. As always, Emma Willis introduces each one as they enter, ready to have their every word and move recorded.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch, Friday, Channel 5, 9pm

FRIDAY
Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. From hundreds of entries received, just 32 have made it on to the judges' shortlist for 2016 – and only one will take the ultimate shed accolade. George Clarke begins his annual quest by turning his attentions to those sheds in the Unique and Historic categories. These include a shed that rotates 360 degrees to follow the sun and another that can hit the road. Also on display are a faithful replica of an Anglo Saxon longhouse and a Vietnam War bunker in Staffordshire.

Celebrity MasterChef
BBC1, 8.30pm
The remaining three competitors' penultimate challenge is the toughest and most daunting of the competition – the Chef's Table, hosted by Michelin star chef Atul Kochhar at Benares, where they must master new techniques and unfamiliar ingredients to impress some of the best chefs in the UK. Judging the food are Cyrus Todiwala, Alyn Williams, Sabrina Ghayour, Romy Gill and Ed Baines. Back at headquarters, the finalists are tasked to present a faultless three-course meal for John Torode and Gregg Wallace – their last chance to prove that they have what it takes to be crowned champion.

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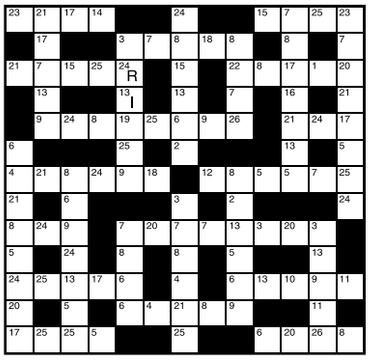
Entertainment Unleashed

BRAIN GYM No.387

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24 R
12	25
13 I	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	V	G	T	Z	L	Y	D	P	B	O	H	E
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
F	A	M	W	Q	R	X	J	S	C	U	K	I

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

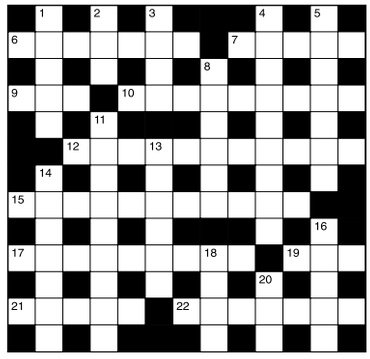
Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. Pretended to have a meal including mixed gin (7)
7. Open place where nations' delegates meet to drink? (5)
9. This farmyard feature will make an eyesore! (3)
10. Giving a service address (9)
12. To promote a greater number in addition (11)
15. See 3 Down.
17. What one may do to distort man's image? (9)
19. How many can be found in the department working? (3)
21. She changed her name from Alice (5)
22. Describing a belted dress not put to good use, we hear (7)

Down

1. See 16 Down.
2. I could be obsessed by this mania (3)
3 & 15 Ac. He is most likely to succeed (4-11)
4. Not settled about what to do next in chess? (2,3,4)
5. They forbid slogans carried by demonstrators (7)
8. Some money required for a gift (6)
11. Just the person to look after the sick girl (6)
13. Dealing successfully with a shrew (6)
14. Commendations to bring up in a postscript (7)
16 & 1 Dn. Confectionery or the dessert course before the lamb and pork etc. (10)
18. Clothing often changed by the driver (4)
20. Cleopatra's part will inevitably reveal it (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

6. Obtain (7)
7. Fumble (5)
9. Suitable (3)
10. Profitable (9)
12. Estimate (11)
15. Announcement (11)
17. Innumerable (9)
19. Assume (3)
21. Centre (5)
22. Skull (7)

Down

1. Pungent (5)
2. Flow (3)
3. Release (4)
4. Learning (9)
5. Promoter (7)
8. Knave (6)
11. Bravery (9)
13. Ring (6)
14. Get back (7)
16. Fashion (5)
18. Certain (4)
20. Conclude (3)

Sudoku

8							2	7
					9		6	
	3	4					1	
		2	3		7			
4			2		8			3
			6		1	2		
	5					7	8	
	4		7		6			
1	8							9

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	9	3	1	4	6	2	8	5
2	4	1	5	7	8	9	3	6
6	5	8	2	9	3	4	1	7
9	7	4	8	3	5	6	2	1
8	3	2	7	6	1	5	4	9
5	1	6	4	2	9	3	7	8
1	6	9	3	8	4	7	5	2
4	8	7	9	5	2	1	6	3
3	2	5	6	1	7	8	9	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Beyond the pale; 8 Full stop; 9 Road; 10 Sapper; 12 Aslope; 14 Ascend; 16 Despot; 18 Etui; 20 Looked on; 22 Insignificant. Down: 1 Refusals; 2 Roll up; 3 Adit; 4 Whip-hand; 5 Spiral; 6 Plea; 11 Redolent; 13 Propound; 15 Elicit; 17 Sketch; 19 Tone; 21 Oafs. QUICK - Across: 7 Unpretentious; 8 Cardinal; 9 Tier; 10 Agreed; 12 Sprite; 14 Trowel; 16 Dreary; 18 Peri; 20 Velocity; 22 In short supply. Down: 1 Endanger; 2 Bridge; 3 Stun; 4 Enclosed; 5 Bitter; 6 Cure; 11 Delivery; 13 Throttle; 15 Weight; 17 Escape; 19 Erne; 21 Last.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. Which once widespread group of languages is divided into Brythonic and Goidelic groups?
2. Which band's first hit single was Seven Seas of Rhye?
3. Which king abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson?
4. Who wrote King Solomon's Mines in 1885?
5. Which gas was identified in the same year by both Priestley and Scheele?
6. On which Japanese city was the second atomic bomb dropped in 1945?
7. What is a leucocyte?
8. Which footballer received a fifteen-month worldwide ban after failing a drugs test at the 1994 World Cup?
9. Which bay separates Miami Beach from Miami?
10. Who won the 1995 US Masters at Augusta?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Klaus Barbie; 2 Jakarta; 3 Quod erat demonstrandum; 4 Cuckooflower; 5 Telstar; 6 Peruvian; 7 Charles I; 8 Lead; 9 Kolkata; 10 Fibrositis.

Niner: PRACTISED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1258 gives a servant,
23946 gives a middleman,
374124 gives a bandit.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 21, 2016

Glorious grub – the meatballs slathered in tomato sauce

Charming location tucked away at the end of a row of shops

Meat feast – the hot dog pizza has a generous amount of topping

Homely feel to the inside of Little Italy

Quirky – but actually there is a lot to like at charming Little Italy

By Pete Cashmore

WHEN I saw the flyer, pinned to the village notice board, announcing that a new Italian restaurant was opening in the village, I was beyond excited.

For sure, we at Tettenhall already have Steve Bull's Bravaccio's, and mighty fine it is too, but something about the name of Little Italy told me that it was altogether more rustic, more homely.

Well, I've eaten at Little Italy now about 10 times, and I have to say it's extraordinary. Now, before I go any further, let me elaborate. It's not extraordinarily GOOD, however good it is. It's extraordinary as in bizarre. Extraordinary as in surreal.

It's run, cheffed and occasionally waitered too by a swarthy (I pondered whether this might be a tad racist but it's the only word for it) balding gentleman who has come to greet me as a friend. He's friendly. He's busy. One thing I'm not sure he is, is actually Italian. I just can't place the accent. That said, I found out that his name is Gino, so he might actually be.

It's not important – what is, is that it's an entirely unique experience. To explain what I mean, here are some of the toppings you CAN'T get for the pizzas – chicken, bacon. pepperoni, but surely that is THE default topping for pizzas – but not here. What you can get is sliced hot dog, and chicken tikka.

Furthermore, if you order one of these pizzas, you may well not end up with what you actually ordered. The hot dog pizza, for example, lists hot dog sausage as its only topping, which I would say is to be expected. But if you don't specifically stipulate it, you'll end up with olives and onions as well, despite the fact that there are plenty of options on the menu where olives and onions are specifically stipulated in the toppings list. It's just baffling, and I for one love it!

Perfection

My favourite thing about Little Italy is that our chef doesn't seem to realise that, once you have blasted a 12 inch deep pan to fluffy perfection – and their deep pans are, make no mistake about it, nudging perfection – then the pan itself has a tendency to be, you know, pretty hot.

And yet our intrepid host, for some reason, insists on slicing the pizza on the pan and picking up the pan to empty it into the box. And every time he does it, you can see that he's scalding his fingers. God love him! But the point at which you realise that Little Italy is a bit special, is when you see the prices. Try these on for size.

Cans of soft drink (there is no alcohol served in Little Italy, although you can bring your own): 70p. Garlic bread: £1, £1.20 with a coating of mozzerella. Burger: £2.50. Tiramisu: £1.50.

Lasagne (and the lasagne at Little Italy is fabulous): £5.95. Throw in two meatballs: add another quid. Ice cream sundae composed of a selection of seven available flavours of high-quality Italian tackle: £3.

I know! You are, often literally, talking as cheap as chips – the most expensive item on the menu is steak, and that comes for the princely sum of £12.

Little Italy is not a fancy restaurant, it's rough and ready but it's in a charming location, tucked away at the end of a row of shops on the highest bit of Upper Green and you can eat outside if the feeling takes you.

Property

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A Chronicle supplement

CHRONICLE

A traditional five-bedroom detached house on elevated position has a high degree of privacy

An individual and traditional five-bedroomed detached house on the edge of town, Norton Stepe, 89 Greyhound Lane, Norton, Stourbridge. is in a highly regarded area.

It is for sale through The Lee Shaw Partnership at £419,950.

It is well placed for town centre amenities including train and bus stations, schooling of good repute, surrounding countryside and access to the wider West Midlands

NORTON, STOURBRIDGE £419,950

conurbation. The property stands elevated to the service road of Greyhound Lane and has a high degree of privacy.

It benefits from three reception rooms, a breakfast kitchen, five bedrooms and a long, landscaped rear garden.

The rear garden features a large paved patio and extensive mature gardens with borders comprising a variety of established plants and shrubs and deciduous trees.

To the front of the property is a fore garden and driveway leading to the garage with the additional of further parking on the opposite side of the service road.

Contact The Lee Shaw Partnership on 01384 396066 or visit www.leeshaw.com website.

Luxury two-bedroom apartment is located in an enviable setting within an exclusive development

In an enviable setting within the exclusive development of Westhill Court off Hagley Road, Oldswinford, Stourbridge, is a really lovely, well appointed, ground floor luxury two bedroom apartment with a host of features and quality fittings.

It is for sale through Taylors at £159,950.

With viewing strongly advised in order to fully appreciate just

OLDSWINFORD £159,950

how much it has to offer, the gas centrally heated and double glazed accommodation is seen to briefly comprise a security intercom controlled communal hall/foyer, apartments own reception hall, a large sitting room with a broad opening to the splendid 'shaker styled' dining kitchen, two good bedrooms with the master en-suite and a principle bathroom having a modern white suite.

It also comes with well managed communal gardens and grounds, with residents' allocated parking and visitor parking.

Contact the agents on 01384 395555 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk website.

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Property

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*SOURCE: JICREG 01.04.2014

Express & Star

TOWN & COUNTRY

PROPERTY SERVICES

NEW INSTRUCTION

MADISON AVENUE MERRY HILL

A two bedroom detached three storey modern property situated in this popular residential location and being in close proximity to the Merry Hill shopping Centre. The accommodation comprises of: Entrance Hall, Downstairs Cloakroom, Study, Breakfast Kitchen, Lounge, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms, Master with En Suite. The property further benefits from having Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Allocated Parking and Communal Grounds. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C

DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO PETS: NO SMOKING: NO

£650PCM DEPOSIT £750 ● FEES

NEW INSTRUCTION

GRAFTON GARDENS DUDLEY

A well presented Modern two bedroom semi detached property situated in a delightful cul-de-sac location with accommodation to comprise of: Entrance hall, cloakroom, fitted kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom. the property further boasts gas central heating, double glazing, enclosed lawned rear garden and driveway affording useful off road parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = B

DSS: NO CHILDREN: YES PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£600PCM DEPOSIT £700 ● FEES

NEW INSTRUCTION

HIGH STREET WOLLASTON

A well presented two bedroom semi detached property situated in a popular residential location close to the village of Wollaston. Accommodation comprises: Lounge, Kitchen/Diner. Utility Room,Two Bedrooms and Bathroom with Shower. The property further benefits from gas central heating, front and rear gardens and driveway affording off road parking. UNFURNISHED. EPC RATING = D

DSS:NO CHILDREN: YES PETS: MAY CONSIDER SMOKERS: NO

£595.00PCM DEPOSIT £695 ● FEES

RICHARDSON DRIVE WOLLASTON

A well presented two bedroom end terrace property in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Entrance hall, kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms, bathroom and rear gardens. The property also benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and off road parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = D

DSS: NO PETS:NO CHILDREN:YES SMOKERS: NO

£525PCM DEPOSIT £625 ● FEES

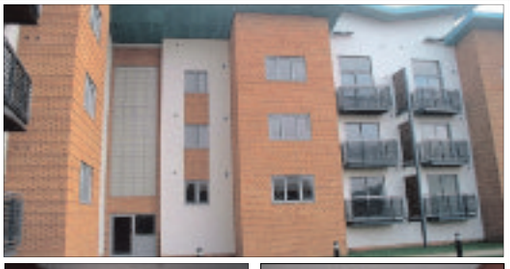
NEW INSTRUCTION

CLARENCE STREET UPPER GORNAL

An Extremely well presented two bedroom terrace property situated in a popular residential location.

The accommodation comprises of lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C DSS: MAY CONSIDER PETS:NO CHILDREN:YES SMOKERS:NO

£525PCM DEPOSIT £625 ● FEES

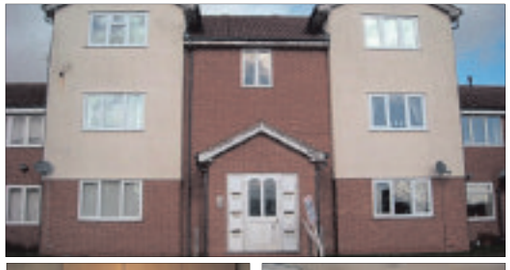


TIMES SQUARE MERRY HILL

A very well presented one bedroom apartment situated in the heart of the Merry Hill centre, close to all amenities. The accommodation comprises of secure entrance, private entrance hallway, open plan kitchen with integral appliances/lounge. Double bedroom and bathroom. The property further benefits from double glazing, electric heating and secure underground parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = D

DSS: NO PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO CHILDREN:NO

£515.00PCM DEPOSIT £615 ● FEES



FOXDALE DRIVE BRIERLEY HILL

A well presented two bedroom first floor apartment in a popular residential development. The property benefits from double glazing and allocated parking. The accommodation comprises of: Communal entrance hall, Private entrance hall, `L` Shaped Lounge, Kitchen, Bathroom and Two Bedrooms. UNFURNISHED

EPC RATING=C DSS:NO PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO CHILDREN: MAY

£410.00PCM DEPOSIT £510 ●FEES

ELBOW STREET OLDHILL

A two bedroom second floor apartment situated in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Communal entrance hall, private reception, lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom with shower. The property also benefits from electric storage heating, double glazing and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

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Classic van and pickup show

The popular Classic Van and Pickup Show returns for a third year to the British Motor Museum on Sunday, August 7.

The show, which is dedicated to light commercial vehicles including pick-ups, ice-cream vans, campers, taxis, hearses and police cars, will also incorporate the 10th year of the Transit Van Clubs annual Rally which takes place on August 6 and 7.

Around 600 vehicles including those from The Transit Van Club, The Post Office Vehicle Club and the Classic Hearse Register are expected to take part. These vehicles will appear alongside the Morris J Type Register and the Morris Commercial Club. All classic light commercial vehicles including custom street vans are welcome, no matter what the make or their condition.

The Transit Van Club Rally will take place over the weekend and will feature seminars/videos with talks given by Peter Lee on the Saturday. The main van display day for the Transit Van Club and Transit driving challenges will take place on the Sunday alongside the Classic Van and Pick Up Show.

Tom Caren, show manager for the British Motor Museum said: "This is a must see show for all lovers of van, pickups and other light commercial vehicles which are often overlooked at other shows. This unique show puts van's and pick-ups into the spotlight for a change."

Tickets for the show and rally: £14 for adults, £9 for children and £39 for a family. Discounted tickets are available in advance online.

To find out more about the British Motor Museum visit the website at www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk or call 01926 641188.

Customers rave about MG GS

It's a month since the MG GS launched in the UK and the newest addition to MG Motor UK's line-up is already causing quite a stir.

In one month, MG has registered over 70 MG GSs and customers up and down the country have been out and about enjoying their new cars. Regional tests drive events have also been taking place. People that currently own competitor brands are finding that the MG GS is proving to be a better value option and, in many cases, a much better drive and more specification for the price.

To mark one month, MG spoke to a few of the new owners of the MG GS. Adam Sloman, general manager of the MG Car Club and pictured above, has just bought an MG GS Excite in 'Sunset Orange' for him and his family to enjoy.

"Being a long-standing fan of MG, I've owned loads of different MGs over the years, from a Maestro to a Midget – but the idea of having an MG that I could get all the family in was a real attraction. We needed a car that was a little bigger, particularly as the kids are getting older. My wife absolutely loves driving it, particularly on the school run as it stands out amongst the other cars. I'm hoping she'll let me have a drive soon! We could have gone for an older MG that is bigger than a two-seater sports car, but there are so many great modern features in the MG GS. Plus, the kids love connecting their phones and listening to their playlists!"

Paul Pickering, a loyal customer of MG for 12 years, became the first customer to collect an MG GS only five years after securing the first MG6. Paul purchased his MG GS from Summit Garage in Dudley. Paul said: "It was great to find out that I was the first owner! My wife and I have chosen the MG GS not just because it's a great looking car, but because it's an automatic – it makes things so much easier for us as we get older. It's also got stacks of space, which means we now have a car that can handle all the luggage for trips away."

The MG GS range starts from £14,995 and is available with a number of great offers, including :

- A five year or 80,000 mile (which occurs first) manufacturer parts and labour warranty
- 0% APR representative finance. This is available up to five years with a minimum 20% deposit
- An £850 deposit contribution on all MG GS models

If you want to find out more about the newest SUV on the market, visit www.mg.co.uk/gs

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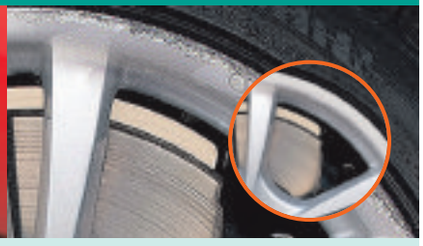
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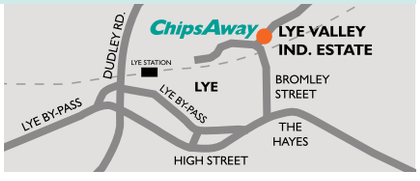

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New Black Edition SV for Nissan Qashqai

Nissan is introducing the stylish new 'Black Edition' to the Qashqai line-up. A new flagship specification for the range, the Black Edition is the first special version of Qashqai available since the model was launched in 2013. Offered in a limited production run, the Black Edition is on sale now and priced from £27,310 on-the-road.

Based on the generously equipped Tekna grade, Black Edition enhancements include 19" Black Ibiscus alloy wheels, Pearl Black metallic paint, front and rear styling plates and 'Black Edition' badged door entry guards.

The model also gains the sleek Panoramic Roof with one-touch shade, making it the only Qashqai with a glass roof as standard – typically a £400 option on Tekna models.

Nissan's suite of advanced safety and driver assist systems – collectively known as Nissan Safety Shield – are included on the car as standard. These include lane departure warning, high beam assist, traffic sign recognition, forward emergency braking, blind spot warning, moving object detection and driver attention alert.

Additional specification includes full black leather upholstery, intelligent park assist, bi-LED headlights and the state-of-the-art NissanConnect infotainment system. Based around an integrated seven-inch high-resolution touchscreen, it includes DAB digital radio and satellite navigation. Nissan's pioneering 360º Around View Monitor – to help with low-speed manoeuvres – is also fitted as standard.

The Qashqai Black Edition is powered by the frugal yet refined dCi 110 6-speed manual 2WD, which delivers 70.6mpg combined fuel economy and CO2 emissions of just 103g/km.

Kieran McMenamin, section manager for Qashqai at Nissan Motors GB Ltd., commented: "Top-grade Tekna versions represent around one in three Qashqai purchases and recent reveals like the Qashqai Premium Concept identify a desire and demand for Qashqai to extend towards the higher end of the segment.

"As a new flagship for the range, the Black Edition is the definitive statement for Qashqai – luxury styling and generous specification but maintaining an accessible price point. In fact, at just £450 more than the equivalent Tekna, the model represents around £1200 in savings compared with individual Option prices on Tekna models."

The multi-award-winning Qashqai's impressive quality, styling and innovative technologies continue to make it the best-selling crossover in Europe. Since production began in 2013, a new Qashqai has been built every 62 seconds, or 58 per hour, at the plant in Sunderland, UK. In September 2015 the Nissan Qashqai became the fastest ever UK-built vehicle to smash the half million production mark.

To find out more visit www.nissan.co.uk

World first with three electrified powertrains

By James Parker

Hyundai Motor UK has announced the pricing and specification of IONIQ, the world's first car to offer three electrified powertrains. IONIQ will go on sale in the UK in October.

Prices will start from £19,995 for the IONIQ Hybrid SE 1.6 GDi, which includes standard features such as 15" alloy wheels, DAB with Bluetooth, Cruise Control and Rear Parking Sensors with Rear View Camera. Standard safety features include Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB), Lane Keep Assist System (LKAS) and individual Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS).

IONIQ Hybrid Premium 1.6 GDi, from £21,795, provides additional equipment over the SE, including keyless entry with push button start, heated front seats, heated steering wheel, Bi-Xenon headlamps with LED rear combination lamps and a driver's supervision instrument cluster with 7" LCD display.

Integrated satellite navigation with TomTom Live services, an Infinity audio system with Android Auto / Apple CarPlay and Wireless Phone Charging (where supported) also feature as standard.

From £23,595, IONIQ Hybrid Premium SE 1.6 GDi models benefit from enhanced comfort equipment such as leather seats with heated/ventilated front seats and heated outer rear seats, heated leather steering wheel and a driver power seat with Integrated Memory System. Blind Spot Detection with Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Front Parking Assist and optional 17" alloy wheels round off this range topping trim.

Colours

IONIQ Hybrid is available in seven different exterior colours; Phantom Black, Polar White, Platinum Silver, Iron Grey, Demitasse Brown, Marina Blue and Phoenix Orange. The lava stone interior trim features blue accents throughout the cabin and control surfaces.

IONIQ Electric prices start from £28,995 for the Premium specification, mirroring Hybrid Premium, with specific equipment including Automatic Windscreen Wipers with Rain Sensor, 16" alloy wheels, LED headlamps and rear combination lamps and Advanced Smart Cruise Control. Integrated satellite navigation is standard across the IONIQ Electric range.

IONIQ Electric Premium SE, available from £30,795 again mirrors Hybrid Premium SE specification, with standard equipment such as leather seats with heated/ventilated front and heated rear seats, heated leather steering wheel and a driver power seat with Integrated Memory System, Blind Spot Detection, front Parking Sensors and EV specific 16" alloy wheels.

IONIQ Electric is expected to receive eligibility for the Plug-in Car Grant, enabling customers to potentially receive a £4,500 grant towards the purchase of the vehicle.

All IONIQ Electric feature standard rapid charge compatibility, ensuring an 80 per cent charge capability in just 33 minutes from a 50kW CCS Combo Rapid public charger, whilst a standard ICCB Charging Cable will allow charging from a domestic three pin supply. IONIQ Electric also features adjustable regenerative braking, via steering column mounted paddles, maximising driver engagement and enhancing efficiency.

Network

IONIQ Hybrid will be available across the Hyundai dealership network from October 13, with IONIQ Electric initially available from a selected network of 27 dealerships, with full network rollout from 2017.

All IONIQ models come with Hyundai's industry-leading 5 Year Unlimited Mileage Warranty package, with the additional high voltage battery cover of 8 years / 125,000 miles.

IONIQ Plug-In Hybrid 1.6 GDi prices and specifications will be announced prior to the on sale date in 2017.

Tony Whitehorn, President and CEO Hyundai Motor UK said: "The all-new Hyundai IONIQ is the world's first car offering three electrified powertrains and it will make low- to zero-emission mobility more accessible to more people. Hyundai's innovative approach delivers an uncompromising design and driving experience, the latest connectivity and safety features with an enhanced industry-leading warranty-package.

"It is also an important milestone in our sustainability strategy, bringing innovative technologies to the market and extending the company's product range of low-to-zero emission vehicles, which already includes the world's first mass-produced fuel-cell electric vehicle, the ix35 Fuel Cell."

Hyundai Motor UK has also announced that POD Point will be the preferred charging partner for customer domestic charge point installations, as well as points across the Hyundai UK dealer network and Hyundai Motor UK facilities.

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VAUXHALL

Facelifted Volvo V40 ticks all the boxes

By Ian Donaldson

IMAGINE the product planning team at Volvo HQ in Sweden when the best-selling V40 range came up for discussion.

Introduced in 2012, it had been on sale long enough for a mid-term facelift – the sort of modest budget update that keeps the car on a potential purchaser's radar.

You could make an industry-wide tick list, such is the degree of similarity among the carmakers of the world. It might go like this for the Volvo:

- New lights and radiator grille (biggest visual change without messing about expensively with the bodywork). TICK.
- New paint colours (five of them; four of those different blues). TICK.
- New designs of alloy wheel. Eight of those. TICK.
- New interior trim (with the choice of a woven look from a motor show one-off). TICK.
- New level of connectivity (allowing your mobile phone to talk to the car). TICK.

Volvo then deviated a bit from the updating bible with a simplified and newly names series of trim levels, introduced a new petrol engine to the V40 Cross Country range and fettled the already low emissions diesel Drive-E engine.

That now produces a fine 89g/km – down from 94g/km – and qualifies for more modest company car tax (18 per cent).

Comfortably more than one in three of all the new Volvos sold in the UK has a V40 badge, so its continuing success is vital to the company's bottom line.

Sales

So the fact that by far the biggest slice of V40 sales go not to the cheapest grade (now called Momentum) or the next up the line (Inscription) but to the trim level called R-Design, which brings a bit of a butch look with different grille, twin exhaust pipes and cosmetic rear diffuser (very F1), along with 17ins alloys, sporty seats, wheel, pedals and floor mats (!), along with an illuminated gear knob.

The R-Design cars will take an estimated 42 per cent of sales and start at £22,345 for a T2 petrol engine (1969cc and 120bhp) although the most popular power unit across the entire V40 range is going to be the D2 diesel, that appeals in spades to company car uses (thank its ultra low 89g/km emissions for that).

Second biggest seller will be entry-level Momentum cars, starting at £20,255 with the T2 petrol engine on board, but at a predicted 16 per cent of sales, they will be a long way behind their dearer R-Design siblings.

Volvo and safety go together like egg and chips and for years the V40 was the safest car ever rated by the European crash test group.

Volvo gives a little smile when it says it now ranks only second – to another Volvo (the newer and much bigger XC90).

Safety

So this latest V40 continues to come as standard with brakes that put themselves on at up to 31mph if the driver ignores a potential crash ahead and the world's first pedestrian airbag, that explodes from the rear of the bonnet to cushion the blow in an accident.

The latest V40 has updates to its Volvo On Call system that makes it compatible with Windows 10 and lets smartphone users remotely lock and unlock the doors, find the car on a map (or supermarket car park) and flash the lights and sound the horn – yes, that's my car over there.

Out in a new Momentum grade V40 with the D2 diesel engine, just dropping into the car back instantly the feel of a modern Volvo; from firm and shapely contours of the seats to no-nonsense graphics on the instrument panel and a solidly sensible approach to the business of getting about in comfort and safety.

The on-paper performance of this D2 1969cc 118bhp diesel (118mph and 0- 62mph in 10.5 seconds) looks modest but the car pulls cleanly and quietly from almost any speed and would gobble up motorway miles.

As ever, the official fuel consumption figure is highly optimistic (better than 84mpg) but the 52.9mpg recorded on the test drive was probably a bit on the pessimistic side.

Not bad anyway and combined with that low, low emissions count promising a wallet friendly time for its probable business user driver.

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public & legal notices

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10 Personals

personal

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sports clubs

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general

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Coach Richie Carter puts Ryan Cotterell through his paces

George Murrin has been at the club for more than 40 years

Bobby Speed, aged 12, and Lewis Morris, 14, during a sparring session

Richie Carter with club trustees Gary Bate and Nick Griffiths

Young boxing hopefuls get Carter treatment

RICHIE Carter has joined forces with Wolverhampton Boxing Club in a move that will double the fight factory's numbers.

He's returning to his roots at their Willenhall Road site after starring as a youngster at national level himself as an unpaid fighter.

Hailing from nearby East Park, Carter represented the now-defunct Bilston outfit that his late father Alan ran and claimed a full national title in the 1987 junior ABA competition.

He then boxed for England before turning pro at middleweight, featuring another 12 times with 10 wins and just one loss before hanging up his gloves in 1992.

He returned to the sport 20 years later to form his own club, Richie Carter's Golden Gloves, which was based in Essington before moving to Wolverhampton.

A fire that gutted the Bushbury Weights and Fitness Centre, where they were tenants, in May left him and his members homeless.

Impetus

Now 45, Carter is hoping to bring further impetus to a new-look regime, with his fighters set to double the carded combatants ahead of the new season.

The coaching staff will also multiply, with Wolverhampton BC – the oldest club in the city having celebrated its 80th birthday – looking to get busy again after a period of mourning.

Former president, secretary and treasurer John Thomas passed away last September. The 77-year-old had served for 40 years and was regarded as their front of house.

His memory lives on, as does the heritage of the club. Apart from Wolves, it is the only organisation permitted to use the City of Wolverhampton crest.

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Craig Birch

"This was an easy choice and something to get excited about. It's a challenge for me."

Carter, who has become a successful businessman and a married father-of-two since calling time on fighting, feels proud to be given the opportunity to help lead the club into the future.

He said: "To be honest, I felt like jacking it all in when our gym burned down. My lads have had to train all over the shop.

"Me and the trustees at Wolverhampton got in touch through mutual friends. We had a meeting and it's all gone on from there.

"This was an easy choice and something to get excited about. It's a challenge for me. This is one of the oldest boxing establishments going.

"I want to do them justice and that means getting champions out of here in the near future. I know myself how hard is to run a boxing club now and many hands make light work. At points, I never had the time to coach.

"I haven't yet proved how good I can be. I've been to the top and I wanted to take others there. Now I can concentrate on getting these lads and this club back to where it belongs.

"I'm Wolverhampton through and through, everyone knows me around here and I hope I'll get a good response from the local people. I loved 'Tommo', as we all did. I remember even when I was a pro he used to help me out and give me the keys to the gym so I could train during the day.

"Myself, the people who are already there and those who are coming with me all bring something to the table. I expect an extra 10 per cent from everyone now."

Carter will transfer his 10 carded fighters over to his new allegiance, with plans to add more of his prospects as they are cleared in the autumn. Wolverhampton are looking to add a double-figure number themselves.

One of Carter's right-hand men, Gary Sands, is joining him with his younger brother David expected to help out. Tony Evans and Wayne Clenton will do likewise, after taking a course.

Clearance

Dennis Stephenson, Graham McFayden, George Murrin and Marcus Ashman – who doubles up as matchmaker – are already on the coaching staff, with Lee Coldicott also awaiting clearance.

Gary Bate and Nick Griffiths are fully qualified but have been serving in behind-the-scenes roles, as temporary secretary and treasurer respectively, after George Langford left through ill-health.

Carter will get down to business on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The juniors are put through their paces from 6pm to 7pm, before the seniors train until 8.30pm. Ashman runs the same set-up on Tuesdays and Thursdays, around sparring on Wednesday evenings with other clubs.

Advanced classes are held on Thursday nights and Saturday mornings for the carded fighters. All pay just £3 each time.

They train in an Olympic-sized ring once used by Amir Khan, who donated it to the club after training through those ropes for the 2004 Games in Athens.

Final whistle

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If you want the definitive read on the weekend football action there is only one place to go – Final whistle supplement in the Express & Star.
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RETURNS AUGUST 8TH

Sport

Boxing coach Carter's young hopefuls are up for the fight

Page 39

Stourbridge FC fixtures

Aug 13	Warrington Town	A
Aug 15	Hednesford Town	H
Aug 20	Ilkeston	H
Aug 23	Frickley Athletic	A
Aug 27	Nantwich Town	A
Aug 29	Barwell	H
Sep 10	Matlock Town	A
Sep 19	Halesowen Town	H
Sep 24	Whitby Town	H
Sep 27	Stafford Rangers	A
Oct 01	Skelmerdale Utd	H
Oct 05	Corby Town	A
Oct 08	Marine	A
Oct 10	Sutton Coldfield	H
Oct 15	Grantham Town	H
Oct 18	Coalville Town	A
Oct 22	Blyth Spartans	A
Oct 31	Corby Town	H
Nov 05	Spennymoor Town	A
Nov 19	Buxton	H
Nov 26	Workington	H
Dec 03	Mickleover Sports	A
Dec 10	Ashton United	A
Dec 17	Spennymoor Town	H
Dec 24	Hednesford Town	A
Dec 26	Rushall Olympic	H
Jan 02	Barwell	A
Jan 07	Warrington Town	H
Jan 14	Skelmersdale Utd	A
Jan 21	Marine	H
Jan 28	Sutton Coldfield	A
Feb 04	Coalville Town	H
Feb 11	Grantham Town	A
Feb 18	Blyth Spartans	H
Feb 25	Whitby Town	A
Feb 27	Stafford Rangers	H
Mar 04	Matlock Town	H
Mar 07	Halesowen Town	A
Mar 11	Mickleover Sports	H
Mar 18	Workington	A
Mar 25	Ashton United	H
Apr 01	Buxton	A
Apr 08	Ilkeston	A
Apr 15	Frickley Athletic	H
Apr 17	Rushall Olympic	A
Apr 22	Nantwich Town	H

Halesowen Town fixtures

Aug 13	Buxton	A
Aug 16	Corby Town	H
Aug 20	Blyth Spartans	H
Aug 23	Nantwich Town	A
Aug 27	Rushall Olympic	A
Aug 29	Hednesford Town	H
Sep 10	Workington	H
Sep 19	Stourbridge	A
Sep 24	Barwell	A
Sep 27	Ilkeston	H
Oct 01	Whitby Town	A
Oct 04	Stafford Rangers	H
Oct 08	Ashton United	H
Oct 11	Mickelover Sports	A
Oct 15	Spennymoor Town	A
Oct 18	Matlock Town	H
Oct 22	Warrington Town	H
Nov 01	Stafford Rangers	A
Nov 05	Coalville Town	H
Nov 19	Skelmersdale Utd	A
Nov 26	Frickley Athletic	H
Dec 03	Marine	A
Dec 10	Grantham Town	H
Dec 17	Coalville Town	A
Dec 24	Corby Town	A
Dec 26	Sutton Coldfield	H
Jan 02	Hednesford Town	A
Jan 07	Buxton	H
Jan 14	Whitby Town	H
Jan 21	Ashton United	A
Jan 28	Mickleover Sports	H
Feb 04	Matlock Town	A
Feb 11	Spennymoor Town	H
Feb 18	Warrington Town	A
Feb 25	Barwell	H
Feb 28	Ilkeston	A
Mar 04	Workington	A
Mar 07	Stourbridge	H
Mar 11	Marine	H
Mar 18	Frickley Athletic	A
Mar 25	Grantham Town	A
Apr 01	Skelmersdale Utd	H
Apr 08	Blyth Spartans	A
Apr 15	Nantwich Town	H
Apr 17	Sutton Coldfield	A
Apr 22	Rushall Olympic	H

Firm helps to kit out young players

Avanti MD Lee Capewell, Edward Solly and Kian Bate

Football

FOOTBALL crazy workers at a kitchen company based in Lye hope that the junior and girls teams at Stourbridge FC will be on the ball this season after announcing a new sponsorship deal.

Avanti Kitchens, Bedrooms and Bathrooms, located in Hayes Lane, is sponsoring the junior and girls Glassboys teams and providing them with new kits and training outfits.

Managing Director Lee Capewell said all the factory workers were football fans and when England lost to Iceland at the European Championship they decided to try to restore some pride in the game by investing in a local team's youth section.

Stourbridge FC chairman Andy Pountney said: "Having Avanti on board to offer this kind of support will be a real boost for the youngsters who are very eager to get the new season under way and will look great in their new gear – we thank them very much for their support."

All the teams will be wearing the kits from the start of the season next month.

CENTURY OLD LEAGUE FOLDS

THE final whistle has blown on one of the West Midlands' longest running amateur football leagues after more than a century.

The Dudley and Cradley Heath League has been forced to admit defeat following a decline in playing numbers. It had run for 106 years.

After running with just one division last season, the prospect of more drop-outs have left the league with no alternative but to call it a day.

The league was formed in 1910 and its most famous player is Ray Westwood, the Kingswinford-born uncle of the great Duncan Edwards.

Having plied his trade on the local park pitches, Westwood went on to play more than 300 times for Bolton and won six England caps.

Secretary Bryan Sutton, of Wordsley, said: "It is really sad that the league has come to an end. There is just a lack of teams and this is the thing now in Sunday adult football. There will be no organised adult football in Dudley."

He first played in the league as a left-back for Darby's Bakeries in 1967 before going on to serve 47 years on the committee. The combined years service of fixture secretary John Lawton, treasurer Malcolm Guy, president Trevor Lester, chairman Carl Dakin, press secretary Brian Pedley and referees' secretary Mel Lewis, together withcommittee members Rob Nicklin and Fred Whitehouse, adds up to 198.

Sutton, who turns 80 this year, said: "I recently found a handbook from four years ago and we had 28 teams. Of those, one still plays in the Warley League, one plays in the Wolverhampton League and two played with us last season. The other 24 don't exist.

"In 1983/84 we had 118 teams across 10 divisions, and we had 12 cup finals. On May 13, 1984, we had three cup finals on the same day and Blackheath Shell played in two of them – one in the morning and one at night."

"In the 70s, Ashtree Rovers were the dominant side, they played down Old Hill, while in recent years AC Turners have been really strong."

One small consolation fis that the league's most prestigious cup competition – The Dudley Guest Cup – will continue.

League secretary Bryan Sutton takes a look through his scrapbooks

Sykes and co-driver overcome gremlins

STOURBRIDGE rally driver Richard Sykes made a successful return to competition, finishing second in class and 19th overall on the Nicky Grist Stages event in Wales.

Sykes' day didn't get off to the best of starts when his Bathams Breweries, G I Sykes Ltd and Body Clinic-supported Citroën DS3 R3 dropped onto three cylinders at the start of the first stage. Despite an under-performing car, Sykes was fifth in class on the opening Crychan stage and fourth on stage two, Halfway.

Sykes and co-driver Janice Moore's saw electrical gremlin affected the car on the remaining stages, but Sykes continued to push as hard as he could and was rewarded with a second in class finish. It was Sykes' first race since Wales Rally GB last year. He suffered a shoulder injury while snowboarding in January for his 50th birthday

He said: "My shoulder stood up to the job and Janice did a great job guiding us through the classic stages used on the event."

Challenge completed in 11 hours

BLACK Country triathletes were well-represented at Upton on Severn for standard and sprint distance races. Both started with a river swim followed by either a 40k or 20k cycle and a 10k or 5k run depending on the race distance.

First home for BCT in the standard was Lee Moreton in 2:16:54, fifth overall and second in age group 40-44. Behind him was Ed Hawkins in 2:19:50, seventh overall and first in age group 45-49, Tim Lake in 2:25:42 and Ed Povey in 2:28:49, first in age group 16-19.

Sue Payton brought the ladies home in the standard race in 2:59:08 followed by Julie Black in 3:04:52, Louise Westbury in 3:14:57, Lorraine Gayton in 3:21:20 and Meg Gregory in 3:25:18.

Three BCT members competed in the sprint. Tim Blewitt came home first in 1:20:51, third in age group 50-54, followed by Lauren Evans in 1:22:17, fifth lady and first in age group 20-24 and Shameer Gopal, who finished in 1:38:15.

Juniors Reece Ashfield and Zoe Brickley entered the British Triathlon Youth Super Sprint Series at Eton Dorney with a 400m swim, 10.6k bike and 2.5k run.

Other juniors raced in the club triathlon at Wombourne. Owen Ulfig and Thea Blakemore were first in the Tristar 1 category, Noah Sandland and Holly Briscoe top in the Tristar 2 age group and Joel Humpage and Ellie Willis first for the Tristar 3 category.

At the 26th Wenlock Olympian Triathlon, Paul Rogers, Chris Pedley, Warren Haynes and Mark Smith took part in a 500m swim, 19km bike and a 7km run.

In the Artemis Great Kindrochit Quadrathlon which involved a 1.35km swim, a 24km run with 7,500ft of climbing, 11km kayak and a 54km bike ride, Mark Anslow finished 10th out 130 entrants in 11 hours 33 minutes.

Steve Blakemore was seventh in age group in the Holkham Half, a 1.2m swim, 56 mile bike and a 13.1 mile run.

Net gain as school players strike gold

WOLLESCOTE Primary ended a successful sporting year by representing Dudley local authority at the Black Country Youth Games.

The school secured gold in the netball, coming from behind to beat Warstones. Their cricketers secured a silver and there was a bronze for tri-golf. The school also entered a multi-skills team.

Deputy head Jim Harrold said: "It has been a great sporting year, with many successes, but importantly plenty of opportunities for our children to experience competitive sport."

★★★

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